

NOVELETTE

R-5 1915

or
“The Tester of Thrills”

By Louis Wilkinson

The SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness



15¢
515

A Few Unusual Things In This Number

“A SPLASH OF SCARLET”—*one day in the life of one woman*

“LE BOHÈME”—*another story of an artist's model*

“THE FAREWELLS OF SEVEN WOMEN”—*their letters*

“THE STALKER”—*a vital story on a vital subject*

“NEAPOLITAN NIGHTS”—*the sparkling night romance of Naples*

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MAY 1915

No. 1

THE SMART SET

Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
and
H. L. MENCKEN

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The Next Number of *The SMART SET*

will be the first of a series of big summer numbers upon which the editors have been working for the past six months. Among the features of this next number will be a complete novelette entitled "**The Wax Model**," by G. Vere Tyler, a well-known writer for *The Smart Set* in the old days, and one who makes her reappearance in *The Smart Set* table of contents with this issue. Have you ever, you men, in sauntering down Fifth Avenue, cast a casual eye into one of the great shop windows of fashion and seen therein the wax model of a wonderful and glorious girl? And have you ever felt your pulse go banging at the absurd notion of meeting the original? Young Mr. Ilchester, one warm, spring day, caught sight of just such a rare lifeless creature and, unable to diminish the quick beatings of his heart, set out, at any cost, to meet the model's other and real self. What is more, after much difficulty, young Mr. Ilchester found her. What happened then is the story the June issue of *The Smart Set* will unfold for you.

¶ Among the notable short stories will be: "**A Nude Descending a Staircase**," by Lula Merrick—the story of what happened in an artist's studio when someone shouted "Fire!"

¶ "**The Scene of Scenes**," by Ernest Howard Culbertson—the story of a playwright's effort to write a love scene that would please the critics. This seems to the editors to be the best theatrical story that has come to their attention in the last three years.

¶ "**The Doctor's Wife**," by Frank Pease—a subtle story of what happened to an hitherto Eveless garrison in the Philippines when a woman showed in its midst.

¶ "**Purely Parenthetical**," by Austin Adams—a new handling of the problem of the "double standard."

¶ "**The Happy Ending**," by Frank R. Adams—a burlesque of the manner in which magazines are currently edited.

¶ "**The Pace**," by Phyllis Bottome, author of "*The Liqueur Glass*"—a story of love and polo, of the two oppugnant sides of a man's character.

¶ The one-act play of the month will be "**Over the Hills**," by John Palmer, the celebrated dramatic critic to the *London Saturday Review*.

Vol. XLVI

MAY, 1915

No. 1

THE SMART SET

A Magazine for the Modish

UNDER THE MOON

By John Chapin Mosher

A WARM summer evening, with many stars, and a low rustling in the tree leaves of the night winds. And from the lighted bungalow above on the hill, waltz music and a faint murmur of laughter and light voices. Below, stiller than a mirror, the river, with a light on a canoe drifting listlessly, with now and then the splash of a careless paddle heard even on the hill in the calm. Of course on the garden seat, happier than the stars and the music, and yet more quiet than the stream, two lovers.

For a long time they have sat thus in silence, close together. At last they begin to talk as lovers do on such nights as these. First some trivial question she asks, as if fearing they could endure no more weighty subject. Some formality about getting late! He doesn't trouble to answer, only presses her closer to him. Gradually they drift into dreams of what life is going to bring to them.

They will travel, they decide.

And they picture to themselves those most beautiful lands—the lands one has never seen. A Venice where golden gondolas glide over canals of lapis-lazuli, bearing gay damozels who sing arias surpassing the world-wide famed divas'. And the Campanile and the Pucci Palace, she has read of them in school, and they speak of them now in awe and in wonder.

The Mediterranean holds them longingly. And they imagine the river with its single-lanterned canoe to be the sea beneath them, as they rest on Monte Carlo's lofty terraces. And the canoe is a wandering pirate ship from Tyre. One knows these far seas still contain such gypsy craft.

But now he bids her leave the cloying south, and in a moment they are in the Kremlin.

She shudders and draws closer to him, as gigantic Cossacks swagger by. But she notices with comfort how respectfully they all pass her lover's strong frame. In sleighs drawn by a hundred dogs they drive together over the vast cold steppes, gazing in wonder at the Northern glories, and warm in rugs of thick rare sable. In the distance they hear the yowling of wolves, but their dogs rush them on in safety. In safety too they pass through strange Tartar tribes, where women with jade rings in their noses and jeweled pendants about their necks, trudge off wearily to plow the fields.

He tells her then of the jewels that he will purchase her. In the Paris bazaars of course—and instantly the steppes fade away with Venice and Monte Carlo. They stand in the great shop of Monsieur Tiffané, and Monsieur himself hustles from his vaults to serve such distinguished guests. An emerald for Madame—*ah, charmant!*—with such an exquisite setting of diamonds—brighter than Madame's eyes!—if diamonds *could* be! But she desires pearls, long ropes of pearls, pearls bigger and rounder than even the imitation pearls one sees advertised so widely. So Monsieur apologizes that they have none worthy Madame's notice, at present, but that he will send out his divers in a special galleon for her command.

When this trifle is settled they ramble up into the Bois de Boulogne—that is the place one always rambles up into in Paris, is it not?—and eat pink ices, while he glares furiously at impudent French fops who dare look too attentively at her. Though he doesn't blame them, poor fellows! And she will not let him forget, either, the piquant Parisiennes who instantly hate their stupid old husbands at the sight of such a splendid American.

Yes, but they must not forget they are Americans. After all they are sure there is only one place for them to live. And to the soft strains of a new and lovely waltz they proceed to build their home. There will be gardens, sunken deep into the earth with wide marble colonnades, and conservatories ever massed with roses and orchids. The furniture, of that rich oak one sees in Fifth Avenue windows, and of gilt. She loves gilt though she thinks it doesn't wear well. But of course they'll get a whole new set every year.

And her room, pink, all pink, with mirrors to the floor, and tiny cupids with wings and no feet carved on the mantelpiece. She forgets even to whom she talks in her rapture at this vision. And when she does remember, she blushes miserably.

He too is struck dumb at this sacred close, and once more they are silent—glowingly, eloquently speechless.

"Darling," he murmurs at last, "marry me to-morrow."

She says it is impossible.

But she wavers.

The haze is fast on them. He pantingly outlines his plans, pressing his lips to her hair. And she hears the Venetian divas' voices, the laughter on the Paris boulevards—she is his, and the future is theirs.

* * *

And they are married. And time passes. And they cannot go to Venice or to the Kremlin or even to New York quite yet. They should be grateful to have that old apartment his father could not rent, and they are—they are too happy, even to dream, for the present. Later they are too busy.

Then one day she is tacking up a picture she cut out of a magazine, trying to cover up a spot on her bedroom wallpaper. She steps back to see if it hangs straight. It is from an old master, and in the corner are tiny wingéd loves—without legs. And as she looks there rises before her that enchanted summer night, and the life they had painted there.

She looks around the room and out through the doorway into the hall. And there are tears in her eyes.

A door slams. He enters and seizes her in his arms too excited to notice that she has been crying.

"Darling," he shouts, "it's come—it's *come—my raise*," and he whispers in her ear a sum too astounding to be uttered aloud. And she—she clasps his hands, and lifts eyes from which all tears have fled:

"My dearest," and her voice breaks with happiness, "now we can have chicken on Sundays."

THE CONNOISSEUR OF EMOTION OR THE TESTER OF THRILLS

By Louis Wilkinson

CYRIL DENISON, private secretary, was lounging as usual in an armchair in the library of his employer's house in London. He was smoking a cigarette and reading a novel, also as usual. It was an afternoon in winter. Denison put the book on his knees, yawned, and then took up the book again. After a minute or two the door opened and the butler, Wilmot, appeared.

"You rang, sir?" he enquired.

"Whiskey, Wilmot, please," said Cyril, more briskly than one might have thought.

The man hesitated.

"I'm afraid not, sir," he replied, not unexpectedly.

"Oh, come now, Wilmot." Denison was gently remonstrant. "Whiskey is indispensable."

"Very sorry, sir." The butler approached him in a confidential, proprietorial manner. "Mrs. Joyce is—er—not favorable to the consumption of spirits at this time of day. I'm only doing my duty, sir, in acquainting you with the fact."

"Absurd!" Cyril was a trifle petulant. "She won't come in here, and you know dear Theodore wouldn't mind." ("Dear Theodore" was his employer.)

"Mrs. Joyce"—the butler remained unconvinced—"Mrs. Joyce keeps a careful eye, sir."

There was a pause.

"On second thoughts"—Cyril spoke with a change of tone—"On second thoughts, I could do with two whiskies. One would be indispensable.

The other purely altruistic. . . . Of course, you take the meaning of the word 'altruistic'?"

"Certainly, sir. I am the Vice-President of an Ethical Society."

"That's quite as it should be, Wilmot."

"One of our leading Ethical Societies, sir." The butler came a step or two nearer to Cyril, and lowered his voice, "In the Holloway Road. Meetings for debate every third Sunday in the month at half past seven. . . . Excuse the liberty, sir, but if you could see your way to come one night—as my guest, sir—"

"Delighted," Cyril waved his hand affably, "delighted."

Wilmot bowed.

"The pleasure would be ours," he said in his stately way, "ours entirely. And, if I might mention it, would you mind calling me 'Mr. Wilmot' for the occasion? It might be a trifle more suitable under the circumstances."

"Certainly, certainly. And suppose I call you 'Wilmot' by mistake, mind you cover my confusion by calling me 'Denison,' won't you?"

"That is very considerate of you, sir." The butler bowed again. "Coffee and other light refreshments are served at the close of the proceedings. You will not object to taking part in the debate, sir?"

"Oh, I'll talk for as long as you like."

"Speeches are limited to twenty minutes for members, but in the case of a guest a little more license is usually recognized. Half an hour would just about hit it for you, sir."

THE CONNOISSEUR OF EMOTION

"Entirely at your service, Wilmot." Cyril was very grave.

"Oh, don't put it like that, sir. *Two* whiskies, you said, sir?"

"Yes." Cyril took up his book. "Manage it tactfully, Wilmot."

The man hesitated and looked at Cyril a trifle lugubriously. "One needs a great deal of tact," he observed, "in an Ethical Society."

He was moving towards the door, when the voice of the young secretary arrested him.

"Oh, stop a minute! I think I'll have a Vermouth instead. With a touch of bitters and a dash of soda."

Wilmot turned. "I prefer to try for whiskey, sir," he said doubtfully.

Cyril gestured vaguely. "A little ingenuity, Wilmot—a little tact—I have every confidence—"

The butler went. Cyril lit another cigarette, lifted both legs over the arm of his chair, and waited for his Vermouth.

II

WHEN Wilmot reappeared in a minute or two, it was not with Vermouth, but with a visitor.

"Mr. Whatley," he announced, ushering in an athletic, good-looking, dark young man of twenty-five or thereabouts.

"My dear Bernie!" Cyril did not rise. The sight of Whatley made him react, apparently, to an even more manifest languor than before. "Have you come to see me or Theodore? He's out somewhere with Nita Waveney just now, I fancy, but they'll be back before long."

"What time is it now?" asked the other, in a business-like tone.

"It must be after six, or I shouldn't want to drink Vermouth."

"H'm." Whatley surveyed him disparagingly. "I didn't know your habits were so regular. Why Vermouth?"

"With a touch of bitters and a dash of soda. There's no other reason."

Whatley sat down, very definitely. He emitted a faint hissing sound.

"Do you ever," he asked, "do any work? Are you ever supposed to do any?"

"I am invaluable." Cyril cocked one foot a few inches higher. "When I came first Theodore used to write twenty or thirty letters a day. Now he hardly ever writes any. It took me only a week to convince him that it was quite unnecessary. I consider that week's work grossly underpaid. Think of the time I save him!"

Whatley grunted again: you might almost have said that he growled. "Oh, you're a genius," he heavily underlined the sarcasm. "I suppose you've been living on that week's work ever since?"

"And I hope to continue living on it for at least another two years, with luck." The secretary's pitch of tone grew higher and higher, almost achieving falsetto. "I'm really immensely useful all round. It's a great thing for Theodore always to have somebody in the house who's intelligent enough to appreciate him."

"He isn't doing much writing now, is he?"

"My dear fellow," Cyril appeared to be pained, "you seem to forget that Nita Waveney is staying with us. Theodore very rightly thinks that it would be criminal of him to waste his time writing when he might be entertaining her. You must appreciate that."

"That's just what I *don't* appreciate." Whatley grew suddenly very red in the face. "The fact is I am practically engaged to Nita."

"Fancy that! Dear Bernie, what an admirable arrangement!" Cyril paused, and flicked the ash off his cigarette with a tapering, fastidious finger. "One should always," he went on meditatively, "be *practically* engaged. It is so much safer than being engaged outright—in the usual incontrovertible way. By all means remain practically engaged for as long as ever you can. It's a most fascinating position to be in."

"I think your remarks are in deplorably bad taste." Whatley spoke with resolute dignity. "And not in the

least amusing. You know perfectly well what I mean. I think a great deal of Nita, and I fancy she—er—that is, I have reasons to suppose—well, hang it, I want to marry her, and I am not in the least ashamed of it."

"Then you ought to be. Society decrees that one must neither have too much of the woman one loves or not enough." Denison had not studied the plays of Oscar Wilde altogether in vain. "You are," he went on with exasperating deliberation, "you are choosing the surfeit of the glutton instead of the zest of the epicure."

"You are outrageous." Whatley stood up and braced himself. "You have evidently never been in love yourself. You are probably incapable of being in love at all. You are a poser through and through."

"Quite right, Bernard." Denison continued to tease in his feline way. "Always retort indignantly when you can't retort reasonably. That's one of the secrets of success in political life. By the bye," he continued after a pause, "Miss Waveney must be a good deal younger than Mrs. Joyce."

Whatley was interested at once. "Oh, you know," he replied, "they're only half sisters. Same father, of course, old Canon Waveney. But he's dead now, and so is his second wife—as, of course, you know."

"I don't." Cyril yawned. He was thinking of his belated Vermouth. "How should I? Theodore never talks about his wife's relations. Very few men do, unless they've married above them."

Whatley went on with his information. "Nita lives at an uncle's," he said earnestly. "My brother-in-law's place is practically next door to his in Staffordshire."

"Depths of the country, isn't it?" Cyril yawned again. "It's very easy to fall desperately in love in the depths of the country. Town-life is the only true test of a passion." He grew more Oscarian than ever, out of sheer ennui. The entrance of Wilmot at that moment, with Vermouth, whiskey and

a siphon, relieved him immensely.

"You'll take whiskey, Bernie, won't you?"

"No, thank you."

Whatley's refusal was somewhat curt. He strode off to the other end of the room. Denison took the decanter.

"Mr. Whatley takes it about half-and-half, I think, Wilmot, doesn't he?" he enquired as he poured.

"Oh, no, sir," the butler made a deprecating gesture. "Ratio of about one to two, sir—or two and one-third. Not quite so strong as that, sir; just a shade more soda."

Denison held up the filled glass in Whatley's direction. "Here you are, Bernie!" he cried, and Whatley turned abruptly.

"Whiskey?" he said impatiently, "oh no, thanks."

"No whiskey?" the secretary raised his eyebrows. "How quickly you change your mind. Put the Vermouth here, Wilmot. Thank you."

Wilmot went, with the whiskey, and the two young men were silent for a while. Denison sipped his Vermouth. Whatley continued to walk about the room in an unsettled manner. Finally he took up a position by the mantelpiece and tapped his feet on the floor. "I don't like the way Theodore Joyce is going on with Nita," he said.

"Describe the emotions that his conduct inspires in you. Express yourself."

"Shut up. I mean that it isn't right, that it isn't fair to me."

"But think how much it enriches your experience."

"Please be serious." Whatley sat down as though he were taking the chair at Wilmot's Ethical Society. "It's a serious matter. I've come this afternoon to ask your advice as a friend. You know Joyce much better than I do; you're in the same house with him and with Nita."

"Come now, Bernie, don't be absurd. Dear Theodore isn't in the least dangerous!"

"But the point is," Whatley spoke

in a serious debating tone, "does Nita care anything about him? If she doesn't, he can be as dangerous as you please, and it won't matter. If she does, he can be as harmless as you please, and it will. Very much."

"It's terribly selfish of us bachelors to grudge married men their occasional consolations."

"It's information I want." Whatley began tapping with his feet again. "These general remarks of yours are quite beside the point."

"I'm afraid information isn't quite in my line, but I can give you any amount of criticism. I have formed quite a lovely little estimate of my own of Theodore's character. It would be completely wasted on you, though," the secretary added with a sigh.

"Tell me if he's a blackguard." Whatley's jaw shut with a snap.

"Oh, no!" Cyril rejoined with mild surprise, "he'd never take enough pains. He's not conscientious enough for that. He has brains, of course, but it takes more than brains to make a blackguard."

"Well, I call it a blackguardly thing for a man to make love to his sister-in-law, especially when she's staying in his own house."

"And especially when she's engaged—practically engaged—to you. But these general remarks of yours are rather beside the point."

"Oh," Whatley was huffed, "I'm not afraid of being particular. I say it's a blackguardly thing for Theodore Joyce to make love to Nita."

"That's better. When you say dogmatically that a married man must be a scoundrel if he makes love to his sister-in-law, you proclaim a moral standpoint of 1880. Every modern man who's not a fool knows perfectly well that there may be occasions when making love to a sister-in-law assumes the frowning aspect of a moral duty. Or even of an act of heroism. We have learnt that it is just as important to know when to break the Commandments as to know when to keep them."

There was a pause. Whatley did not

reply. He seemed to have given it up, but he hadn't. "Tell me, Cyril," he resumed tenaciously, "do you think Nita is . . . at all attracted by Joyce?"

"Ah!" Denison shook a finger at him. "That's really the point. The heinousness of his making love to her wouldn't disturb you in the least, if she weren't. But if she cares for him, his blackguardism calls aloud for reprobation."

"Why, of course. As I said, if she's indifferent there's no harm done."

"You are a cynic." Cyril threw back his nice little head, with its nice little auburn curls. "Bernie, you are profoundly immoral. If Nita is fond of Theodore, there's some excuse for him. Otherwise his persecution of her is abominable and in the worst possible taste."

"I'm not in the least concerned about his character or his taste." Whatley gave his chair-arm a vicious punch.

Cyril shrugged his shoulders, in imitation of the Boulevard manner. "It's quite natural," he went on, "that Nita should fall in love with Theodore. He's handsome, and though he must be nearly forty, he doesn't look it."

"But he's married."

"By no means a disqualification nowadays. But let me reassure you. I said a few minutes ago that Theodore wasn't in the least dangerous, and I meant it. He doesn't understand life, and he doesn't understand women. As for an intrigue, he has no notion how to manage it. Quite pathetic, I assure you. He shows his hand at once: too frank altogether, too unreserved. The fact is, he's fatally fluent: he never knows what not to say. . . . Why, no man with arms and hands should ever waste time trying to persuade a woman with his tongue! Theodore has hopelessly little of the primitive man about him, and he's not sophisticated enough to make up for it. His emotions are trotted out into the limelight on the smallest provocation. Women don't like that. They like a little make-believe of mystery."

"But Joyce is extremely popular with

women." Whatley's brows were knitted. "And always has been," he added.

"Of course." Denison had warmed to the theme. "Of course. In point of public display he's the best lady's man I know. But I'm convinced that in a *tête-à-tête* he would be terribly disappointing. He can talk like a lover, play like a lover, enjoy the idea of being a lover; he's an expert in preliminaries and manages them with consummate art. But the real right thing—oh, he hasn't the least vocation for it! Or, rather, between ourselves, I think he's afraid of it. Perhaps he's afraid of dulling his palate. As a correspondent he wouldn't convince even a British jury."

Whatley grunted, rose once more from his chair, and walked about in uneasy meditation.

"I don't know," he said after awhile, "that you've altogether reassured me. Joyce may be deeper than you think."

"He's not the sort of man girls fall in love with." Cyril pronounced the words as *ex cathedrâ*. "And I don't think he wants them to, either. If they did, it would probably upset him extremely. He likes them to like him to make love to them. That's as far as he gets. In fact, he's a genuine trifler—a very rare species indeed. Women instinctively regard him as a *hors d'œuvre*. Which is exactly what he is, and what he always will be. He—"

III

CYRIL was interrupted by sounds outside the door, sounds of treble laughter and shrill excited cries and racing footsteps. The door-handle turned. "Splendid! Splendid!" An admirably modulated tenor voice exclaimed. "You are delicious, my darlings, perfectly delicious! Go and get Auntie Nita, Brian, and bring her in here with you."

The door opened, and Theodore Joyce appeared, holding his little girl, Maisie, by the hand. She was dressed in a boy's costume of green velvet, with a cap of the same color and material. Her dense russet hair was loose about

her shoulders, hiding her ears; she looked like an enchanting mediæval page, although she was not behaving like one. Her exuberance was evident; she danced and jumped and laughed as she came, and finally took both her father's hands in hers and swung him round in a circle with her.

"Am I a success, daddy?" she asked, breathlessly, "what do *you* think?"

"My dear," her father leaned down to her and patted her cheek, "you're triumphant. You're an achievement. Isn't she, Cyril? Come," he put his hand on her shoulder, "come and show yourself to this wicked young man." He turned and greeted Whatley.

Maisie ran up to Cyril without a moment's hesitation. "Oh, I just wanted to do that," she said seriously. "What do you think of me, Mr. Denison?"

"A prince! A prince!" Cyril stroked the child's hair, and regarded her with lively admiration. "You are perfect! Dear Theodore, how adorably epicene!"

Theodore Joyce was talking with easy affability to Whatley, whose expression remained singularly taciturn. "Been having a chat with Cyril? For heaven's sake don't let him demoralize you. I warn you against him. He's corrupted me shockingly since he came to live in my house."

"It's no use, Theodore," the secretary observed wearily, "I'm proof against flattery, even from you."

He made to kiss the little girl, but Maisie drew back, laughing and pouting and shaking her waving hair.

"No," she cried, you musn't, now I'm a boy. You can kiss Brian instead. Why doesn't Brian come, daddy? I want us both to be together." She clapped her hands in an ecstasy. "Oh, you must see Brian, Mr. Denison!"

"I'm sure Brian isn't nearly as nice as you are."

Theodore raised a protesting finger. "You're quite unconscionable, Cyril," he said, coming over to them from the unresponsive Whatley. "You have a more deplorable influence on my children than I have myself."

Maisie seized him, put her hands on his shoulders and lifted herself off the ground. She fell suddenly on his neck, hugged him fiercely in spite of his gasping deprecations, then released him and skipped away, with peals of laughter.

"Well, I must really be off." Whatley took a couple of determined steps towards the door. Maisie ran in front of him in the same direction.

"I can hear them!" she exclaimed. "Here he is—here's Brian with Auntie Nita!"

She flung the door open for them. The little boy was dressed in a beruffled white party-frock, with a broad silk sash; his legs were bare up to where the little lace-trimmed undergarments showed under the edge of the skirt, and he wore an elaborately-curled flaxen wig. Seeing Whatley and Denison, he became suddenly scared, and retreated to Nita Waveney, putting his arms round her and pressing his face to her dress.

"Come, come, darling," said the girl, "there's nobody here to be afraid of."

She stooped and patted the child's head, stooped with an Isidora Duncan gesture that threw her figure into a mould especially worth admiration.

Nita Waveney was tall and slim, slim enough to wear the most modern style of dress without giving the effect of a slenderness due to fashionable compression. Her figure and her features would have lent themselves well to the art of a black-and-white draughtsman of the Beardsley school; a certain rather morbid aspect of elongation was presented by both. Critics might have said that she was too much stressed here or there, and elsewhere insufficient. They might have indicated an undue prominence of cheekbone, a narrowness of the eyes, a tendency to recession to the chin, a pallor perhaps foreign to health, an air, in general, that was Troublesomely unusual, even, one might say, a little sinister. But no one could have denied the beauty of her rich chestnut hair, so magnificently coiled, couched, you might say, at

sumptuous ease; flung, regal and barbaric, between her pallid temples and her pallid throat. Her eyes, too, though mongolian, were not contracted as by meanness, by inadequacy of spirit; ambiguous, dissatisfied, desirous, they had, one felt, yet to wait their turn to declare a purpose, to define a future, whether of love, of cruelty, of suffering, of destruction. They were dark eyes, eyes almost black, wonderfully in contrast and in complement with her wonderful hair. In spite of her attenuation, her bosom showed generous curves—another contrast that had its impressions, its attractions, usually either for the very simple-minded or for the very sophisticated. Her mouth was rather large, rather irregular in shape, with lips that looked very red against her pale flesh. "I suppose she's striking," even the most decrating observer would have said, though with a shrug of the shoulders. Her sex-charm to some was immediately magnetic, for others it had no existence at all. She was not yet twenty.

"It's all right, Brian," Nita continued to soothe him, with more than one oblique intimation in her tone and her gesture. Whatley stood, without moving, without speaking, looking earnestly at her, trying, so it seemed, to understand without knowing what it was that had to be understood.

Theodore Joyce, with a look of lively animation in his glinting green eyes, advanced.

"Oh, don't reassure him, Nita," he cried, "I love him to be shy like that. He's bewitching when he's timid."

Nita gave him a quick half-look, equivocal, hinting mockery and challenge.

"What on earth," Cyril demanded in his laziest, most gradual tone, "What on earth have you wicked people been doing?"

Maisie, who had returned to him for fresh admiration, protested shrilly. "They are not wicked. They are very nice. Auntie Nita was simply lovely, she helped us beautifully."

"Ah!" Theodore was continuing a subtle exchange of glances with his sister-in-law. "But it was my idea, wasn't it, Maisie?"

"You're not to call me Maisie!" The child stamped her foot. "I'm Rupert, Prince Rupert. Mr. Denison said I was a Prince. Don't be silly, Brian—turn round. What's the good of dressing up if you won't be seen?"

Brian turned. "You're not to call me Brian, Maisie."

"You're not to call me Maisie, Brian." She made a face at him.

"Rupert, then." The little boy spoke with the most deliberate irony. "I'm Fragoletta," he announced with a change of tone, as turning his attention to a serious subject. "Daddy said so."

His father pinched his cheek.

"Oh, you degenerate little rogue," he said blandly. "You've been painting your face and tiring your hair. I shall call you Faustine or Dolores."

"What a shame!" Maisie exclaimed, indignantly, "and I haven't got any on me at all! Will you paint me up, Mr. Denison?"

"Rupert, this is not manly of you."

"What nonsense! I'm acting just as much as Brian—I mean as Frazzlette is. And if you won't paint me, Mr. Whatley will. Won't you, Mr. Whatley?" She ran up to him.

"I'm afraid making-up isn't much in my line."

Whatley was still standing. He had left off looking at Nita, and was now a shade embarrassed, as though he felt "out of it," wanted to go, thought he should go, yet didn't know quite how to manage it, and had, after all, some sort of wish to stay.

Theodore Joyce approached him. "No," he said, "Whatley has simple tastes." He laid his hand on his arm. "He hasn't got a cult, have you, Whatley?"

"Oh, you can do it all right." Maisie took the young man's other arm. "It's quite easy. I'll go and fetch the paintbox. It'll be more fun with you

than with Mr. Denison because you're more of a stranger."

Theodore laughed. "You're rather by way of being a treat, you see, Whatley," he remarked. Cyril, still in his pet armchair, exclaimed that he was "desolated by jealousy," and Maisie, with impatient brusquery, reminded him that she had asked him first, "but you were stupid. Where's the paintbox?" she demanded of her brother.

"It isn't a paintbox," he replied, with an indignant sense of her abuse of language. "It's a beautiful little, tiny little pot."

"Well, where is it?" Maisie exercised the full authority of her two years seniority, but Brian was not impressed.

"Don't tell her, Auntie Nita," he said boldly.

Maisie balked, relapsed on personal attack. "You're jealous," she told him, "just because I look lots nicer than you did when you were a boy. Come with me, Auntie, and you can show me. You can help Mr. Whatley paint me, too."

Whatley took the opportunity to address Nita Waveney for the first time. "You had better take Maisie in hand without my help, Nita." He was stiffer, more reserved, more on his dignity than ever. "I'm sure I would only be in the way. Besides I must really be going."

Nita gave him a glance of beautifully calculated indifference. "Oh, no," she said. "Don't. We want as much of an audience as we can get."

"I'm sorry"—she had piqued him—but I'm late as it is."

Maisie took him by the arm again.

"How horrid you are!" she pouted. "You must stop and come upstairs with Auntie Nita and me to the nursery."

"Well, for this once, Maisie," Whatley turned away from her, "I'm afraid you can't have your own way."

"Come along, Rupert," Nita beckoned to Maisie. "Good-bye, Bernard. Please don't look so serious!"

He flushed, and she laughed lightly as though at something that Maisie was saying to her. The little girl took her

hand and called to Cyril and Brian, who were talking and playing together in the corner, to come along with them.

"Well, so long, Cyril," said Whatley gruffly, as the secretary followed with the little boy.

IV

THEODORE JOYCE sat down absently and stared, absorbed, in front of him. "Good-bye, Mr. Joyce," said Whatley, in a tone of strong moral disapprobation.

Theodore started. "My dear lad, why on earth don't you marry my charming young sister-in-law?"

Whatley turned on his way to the door. His lips were firmly set, and his chin looked extraordinarily square. "I don't appreciate that style of humor, Mr. Joyce," he said icily.

"Always the way." Theodore raised his hands and shrugged his shoulders. His imitation of the Gallic manner was better than Denison's. "Whenever I happen to say what I really mean," he went on plaintively, "people invariably think I must be joking. I am entirely serious. I think it would be an excellent thing if you were to marry Nita."

"You must really allow me to manage my own affairs on my own account.

Whatley's anger and indignation were increasing visibly, but without producing any apparent impression on Joyce, who continued to make use of mild, deprecating gestures.

"Certainly," he replied. "Certainly. But a little good advice from others occasionally helps. Not that my advice goes for anything, of course. I'm used to that. The expression of my best intentions is often regarded as a carefully calculated insult. It is pathetic, but it can't be helped. All the same, marry Nita in spite of me. Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"I don't happen to propose to order my life so as to give you pleasure." Whatley looked positively murderous. Joyce did not even glance at him. He sat in the same position, leaning his chin on the palm and knuckles of his

white plump hand, the forefinger pressed meditatively against his cheek.

"Come, come," he said suavely. "We're not in the ring. It's no use striking out. No use hitting me, because I never defend, just as I never attack. If everybody were like me we should all be sporting in the Elysian Fields."

Whatley gave an exclamation of impatience. The sight of Joyce, so placid, so well at ease, so self-content, so self-contained, so exasperatingly and unconsciously egoistic, stirred his bile to the depths. Could Nita really care for a man of this kind, a cleverish gabbler, that was all he was, a person without stamina, without a single quality that was of use in the world. How could he possibly appeal to a girl little more than half his age? A fellow who wasted his time writing plays and poems that nobody ever read—a dabbler, an incompetent footler even in his own silly line of business, yet no doubt thinking himself a genius all the time.

Cyril had said he was good-looking; well, perhaps he was, but not in a manly way. He had effeminate soft flesh, and plump, sickly fingers, with disgusting rings on them. Whatley regarded his carefully-arranged, fair, curly hair, so crisp and so sleek; his large, light green eyes; his delicate, straight nose; his white, broad, unwrinkled forehead; his self-indulgent mouth, that was like the sated mouth of a spoilt child. Yes, confound it, Joyce looked young; you might take him for thirty. That was because he had always done as he liked, always lived selfishly, never made any effort. Whatley succeeded in despising him almost as much as he wanted to despise him. He moved towards the door, then hesitated and turned, hesitated again, and finally, being in love and anxious to do something, decided to speak.

"If I may follow your example of frankness—"

Joyce looked at him a little startled. "For heaven's sake," he interrupted, "don't say anything unpleasant. That's an ominous beginning."

"I was only going to say," Whatley doggedly continued, "that I'm rather surprised that you should want me to marry Nita, because you—er—pay such a great deal of attention to her yourself."

"Because I make love to her, you mean? Because I am in love with her, in fact?" Joyce's eyes were wide and benign.

Whatley felt as though he had been partly stunned by a blow on the bridge of his nose.

"I don't know about that," he muttered. "I—er—I wouldn't go so far as that."

"Oh, but I would." Joyce was blithe as a bird. "Quite as far. Don't you see that it's just because I'm in love with Nita that I want her to be married, and I pay you the compliment of thinking that you're a most suitable husband. I can't marry her myself, can I?"

"Do you mean"—Whatley recovered himself and spoke with heat—"do you mean that it would be easier for you to have an intrigue with her if she were a married woman?"

"Now really!" Theodore winced. "Really that is rather vulgar of you, Whatley. It pains me to say so, but it really is."

"Then what do you mean?" Whatley faced him with contracted brows.

Theodore lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair. "Let me do myself justice," he said deliberately. "It's rather a priggish sort of thing to do, but it may be a little illuminating. I'm not—temperamentally I'm not—a Don Juan. I can't cope with difficulties. I'm repelled—instinctively repelled—by what is objective. Somehow, when it comes to the point, all my ardors are struck cold. And they burn so brightly and beautifully up till then! I don't care for achievement. I dally by the margin of the path that has many turnings, and leads nowhere. That's my way. I assure you that I'm not in the least the sort of man for what is generally understood by an intrigue."

"H'm. Just what Cyril was telling me," Whatley thought aloud.

"Oh, he was, was he?" Joyce's tone was faintly ironical. "Well, that's not very clever of him, because I told him myself. I generally do tell people. But about this matter of you and Nita." He turned his chair towards Whatley, leaned forward and began to speak very confidentially. "Of course, I'm immensely attracted to her, and the present occasion is wonderfully fine for me in all sorts of ways. But it can't last for me—I see that. In my way I'm fickle, I want a change of situations, just as other men want a change of mistresses. I want—the idea of Nita under different conditions. I want the idea of her as a married woman—newly married. I want the next phase, with all its delicious tangents, its adorable incidentals." He shot the tip of his tongue between his lips for one instant. He closed his eyes, and sank back on his evoked sensations, as on some lush divan. "And I'd much rather be in a backwater all the time. That's my right *milieu*, and it's only by keeping to it that I can retain my sensitiveness to impressions. Or that's what I think, anyhow. Now do you understand?"

"I see." Whatley had calmed. He was now, as it were, on living terms with his indignation, which he sought to counterbalance by a restrained and well-timed irony. "I see. Nita and I are to play your game for you."

"Come, come, dear fellow." Theodore shaded his eyes with his hand as he looked at him. "Don't pretend that you don't want to play it for yourself. Why, you're in love with her, aren't you?"

"Haven't you been rather indiscreet in telling me what you have? Suppose I did marry her—why, you've put me on my guard."

"What against? What against?" Theodore raised his voice to a higher pitch, the pitch that Denison so often employed in imitation. "Don't say that you'd be jealous of the kind of interest I should take in you both. It's simply

absurd to be jealous of a man like me."

"Not at all." Whatley reassumed his steady and deliberate reasoning tone. "Your attitude towards Nita is admittedly—not platonic. I consider it a very dangerous attitude. On your own showing you're near the borderline. You might easily cross it."

"Never! Never! Everything would be spoilt if I did. All the bloom would be gone, I assure you."

Whatley leaned heavily on the back of a chair, facing Joyce. He called up the somewhat lumbering reserves of his common sense, and did his best to give them an air of alertness.

"But how do I know?" he asked, "that this isn't a trick on your part? 'All's fair in love.' This may be your method of lulling my suspicions, which I may as well tell you," he added with a certain shamefaced stubborn desperation, "have been roused pretty effectually by the way you have been going on with Nita."

Joyce brought his soft hands very gently together. "Confessed! Confessed!" he exclaimed lightly. "You do feel a sort of proprietary right in her then, do you? I'm delighted. Well, forbid me your house after you're married, if you like, I only ask that you shan't settle in Australia. Oh, you don't know with how exquisitely little I can be content!"

"This insistence of yours that you mean no harm isn't particularly reassuring."

Whatley was determined not to let his idea escape him: when he stood he seemed to stand with feet squarely planted on the idea: when he sat down, as now he did, he seemed to sit upon it. It was always where nobody could run away with it.

"Suppose," he went on, "suppose this—eccentric interest of yours in Nita turns out to be just the sort of thing to make her fall in love with you? With women, with girls especially, one never can tell."

Joyce rose and patted the young man's reluctant shoulder.

"Risk it!" he said in his sibilant ca-

ressing way. "Risk it, dear boy, risk it! And don't be ungrateful to me. I fancy I've helped you immensely. Just now, when you and she were here together, what could be more promising? You hardly exchanged a word. Undercurrents, undercurrents—with their throbbing ebb and flow! All suggestive of something so much finer than words can make it. The air was pregnant. What occult significances! Ah, you lovers," he spoke with accumulative relish, "you can create atmospheres, but you can't really enjoy them. That's for us others, that's for me!"

"H'm. I fancy this particular atmosphere was entirely your own creation. Nita was only thinking of the children."

"That's her art." Theodore sat down again, and drew his chair up to Whatley's. He leaned forward and again adopted a confidential tone. "She was thinking of you all the time. Don't you see how well I've managed for you? I've come between you in the most effective possible way. I've made you jealous—oh, yes, I have, I know I have—and that's made you ever so much more interesting to her. And I've made her seem more difficult for you to get, and that's everything. I've given just the right sort of little turns and twists to your flowery path. To have it too straight—that's very dull and very fatal. Come now, acknowledge me as your ally!"

Whatley looked at him sharply. "You explain too much," he said brusquely—and then, with an evident intellectual gymnastic effort, "I'm inclined to think you're either too deep or too shallow."

"Thanks," Joyce replied wearily, "I'd rather be shallow. Everybody is deep nowadays. It's a tiring fashion. I've been terribly bored by it for the last ten years. Ah, there's Cyril. Cyril and I teach each other to talk like this, you know. We prefer it to bridge. Well, Cyril?"

Denison closed the door carefully behind him. "We painted Maisie beautifully," he announced, lingering delicately on the adverb. "She was quite

enchanted with herself. Brian did a skirt dance under her direction, and then they made love to one another with immense success. But after that Mrs. Joyce sent Nelly to insist on their both going to bed at once. So they cried bitterly, and Maisie said that she wouldn't go to sleep at all, in revenge."

"Too bad! But I should have liked to have seen them cry." Theodore's eyes gleamed. "I always rather enjoy that."

"What a brute you are, Theodore," Cyril replied indifferently.

"He doesn't mean it," Whatley declared savagely. "He only says it for effect."

"It's only when I say what I don't mean that I get credit for being sincere. I found that out long ago." Theodore sighed as he rose. "Well, I'm going off now to make love to Nita. Good-bye for the present, Whatley. When you come next I'll give you every facility for proposing. Three days would be about the right interval, I think—or four, perhaps. But I leave that to your discretion." He waved his hand and went. Whatley stared after him in silence.

"You tackled him on the subject, then?" Cyril inquired after a pause.

"He tackled me. I was going to ask him what the devil he meant by it, but—well, he's extraordinary. The fact is, he has no moral sense."

"Ah, yes—" Cyril walked over to his employer's large writing bureau in the corner of the room, "Ah, yes—and when a man has no moral sense that disarms one terribly, doesn't it?"

"It's absurd to try and deal with Joyce as if he were a man of the world. Man of the world! Why, upon my soul, he isn't a man at all!"

"Just what I told you!" Cyril settled himself in his chair. "Would you like to dictate some of his verses to me? I ought to get them typed and posted before dinner." He took some manuscript out of a pigeon-hole.

"I've had quite enough of Joyce for the present, thank you." Whatley got up. "Good-bye, old man—and for

goodness' sake don't let him make you half as much of a lunatic as he is himself."

"Oh, I understand him too well." Cyril began to look through some papers. "He's no influence on me whatever. Don't you worry. And remember," he cried, as Whatley opened the door, "he's *perfectly* harmless. Egregious, but harmless!"

"I'm not so sure of that," Whatley flung over his shoulder as he strode out.

V

DENISON took some minutes finding the manuscript that he wanted, and some minutes more arranging the typewriter. He had just begun to use the machine when Mrs. Joyce, in evening dress, entered the room.

She was a slender, rather fragile, rather faded blonde, a woman of about thirty-six. The lines of her face had begun to harden, she had already the set look of middle age, of middle age unmellowed. She might have been taken for a spinster, with that particular formal precise air of hers, that air of a person always making up her mind and making it up over things that did not really matter. An imaginative retrospect would have found no difficulty in calling up a girlhood of prettiness, of fair and blue-eyed charm, for her; the suggestion arose that she had grown to be what she was now, in self-defense, that her softness and her grace had been sacrificed for the maintenance of a *point d'appui*. Her aspect produced curiously the impression of something irrefutably moral and practical. She evoked images of duty and dignity and respect. A certain deferential shade, a certain compulsory tone of gravity, overspread even Cyril's insouciant features as she came in. He half rose from his chair.

"Don't let me disturb you, Mr. Denison," she said in a very low and very even voice. "I expected to find my husband here."

"He was here only a moment ago." Denison lowered his own voice in un-

conscious imitation. "I don't think he has left the house since."

"Do you happen to know if he's coming to the theater to-night? I haven't seen him since the morning."

"Oh." Cyril paused and reflected. "I think he is. I remember he said something about it at lunch."

"You will join us, I hope. There's plenty of room in the box."

Cyril bowed and said he would be delighted. Mrs. Joyce turned and went towards the door. Cyril looked down and fingered his papers.

"Oh—Mr. Denison." Mrs. Joyce turned back. "I hope you're quite persuaded Theodore to give up politics. He's not meant for success in that line."

Her sentences had a peculiarly direct, incontrovertible turn.

"Ah, I think all that's quite blown over." Cyril adopted a frank, easy, reassuring, considerate manner. "All the same I confess I thoroughly enjoyed that Socialistic campaign of ours. He created a great sensation, even though he only got a hundred and twenty votes."

"I've no doubt it was very amusing." Mrs. Joyce looked straight at Cyril for a moment, and he felt a little uncomfortable. "But it was all ridiculously expensive."

"I'm afraid it must have been." Cyril looked away. "Great fun," he murmured uneasily, "but, of course, as you say—er—ridiculously expensive. Well," he made an effort, and looked up at her again, "I give you my word, Mrs. Joyce, I'll do my best to prevent anything of the sort occurring again."

"Thank you. Now I mustn't take up your time any longer. I see you're busy."

"Just typing some verses of Theodore's. Nothing in the least political about them."

"I am glad to hear it." She did not smile. "Dinner at half-past seven to-night. I'm afraid we shall be rather hurried."

"Half-past seven. Then I must get this finished at once." He attacked the instrument.

As Mrs. Joyce was on her way to the door it opened, admitting her husband.

"My dear child!" He opened fire at once. "How charming you're looking!" He rested his hands lightly on her shoulders. "That gown suits you quite admirably. And your hair! Why—wonderful. What a superb arrangement!" It was quite simple, really. "You should always stand under the light. Yes, just here, just here. Now you are positively radiant! What a curiously moulded cross! On your neck it shows like a golden light in a pale sky. And those emeralds gleam and quiver on your fingers like the green waters of a marble bath. Imperial marble! Ivory and liquid green!" The clicking of Cyril's typewriter punctuated this oration with grotesque effect. "I will give you a great ruby. Red for white, flame for alabaster, rose for lily, blood for snow, wine spilt on the cloth of the altar! Or a turquoise—will you have a turquoise? Blue as the veil—the veil of Mary! Shot with the lights of innocent eyes! Ah, how virginal you would look with a diadem of turquoise! Turquoise and pearl! But no diamonds, and not much gold. Too hard, too brilliant! And you are so soft, so cloudy-white." He lowered his voice and took her hand. "How slender you are, and how boyish! You are adorable to-night, my darling."

"I was looking for you," his wife replied, "to ask if you were coming to the theater with us this evening?"

Theodore released her hand, and passed his own over his forehead. "Oh, yes, yes," he said absently. "Am I? But I think—perhaps—not to-night. You see, dear," he continued more rapidly, "Nita has rather a headache. She won't be able to go. Playing with the children—she is really quite fatigued."

"You very much overexcited the children between you." Mrs. Joyce kept her low, unemotional, even tone. "I don't think either of them will get a good night's rest. Nelly came to me and complained that they were quite

uncontrollable. I don't wonder Nita has a headache."

"Well—there it is." Theodore opened out the palms of his hands. "I think I ought to stay and look after her."

Mrs. Joyce turned from him towards the door. "If she's really unwell I had better be the one to stay."

"Oh, no, no." Joyce's tone was one of easy, genial, unequivocal remonstrance. "I can't think of allowing you to spoil your evening. Besides, Mrs. Wynne will be desolated if you don't go. You can't leave her to be bored by her husband and me. Why, she's one of your oldest friends. You must treat her with some consideration."

"Mr. Denison is coming with us."

"What!" Theodore became gaily staccato. "A party of three men and one woman! Absurd! One must have some sense of proportion. Now you four will get on admirably together. Cyril will make love to Mrs. Wynne, and the Colonel will make love to you. You must do your best for him. He's sadly unskilful. India cramps the style terribly. They're coming to dinner, of course?"

"Yes, at half-past seven."

"I shall be late, and so will Cyril, and so will Nita probably. Never mind. Begin without us. Oh, yes, by the bye—hullo!" he broke off. "What's this? What audacity! Upon my word!"

Maisie and Brian had made a sudden entrance, in red dressing-gowns, and with bare feet. Seeing her mother, Maisie started and stopped.

"Oh!" she said, taken aback. "I didn't know mummy was here."

Mrs. Joyce confronted her children.

"Maisie and Brian," she spoke authoritatively, with the conventional maternal "quiet displeasure," "you must go back to bed at once."

Cyril rose and stood looking at them, humorously tolerant.

"But, mummy," said Brian, "it's so early."

"We never go to bed till later on, you know we don't, mummy. It's not fair."

Maisie pouted and looked appealing. "Don't be disobedient, Maisie. I've told you to go back to bed."

"Oh, let them stay for a few minutes," Theodore remarked indifferently. "Think what a disappointment, now they've taken all the trouble to come down. And besides, those little red garments are simply enchanting."

The children ran to him, delighted. Maisie, triumphant, put her arms round his neck and kissed him, while Brian, glowing with joy, danced by his side.

"Oh, that is nice of you, daddy! I thought you wouldn't be unkind." Maisie lowered her voice. "We just gave Nelly the slip! Do you know what I want to do? I want to dance another skirt dance!"

"What? In your dressing-gown?"

"Oh, I shall take *that* off."

"It's really rather wrong of you, Maisie," her father protested indulgently.

Mrs. Joyce, who had been watching them in silence, took a step forward. "Come now, Maisie," she said, "you know you never can get to sleep when you are excited."

"But I don't want to go to sleep!" The child tapped impatiently her charming naked foot. "Do say I may, daddy!" She kissed her father again and whispered to him.

Cyril walked over in a diffident, apologetic way to Mrs. Joyce. "Shall I get them away?" he lowered his voice. "Perhaps I could manage it."

"No, no," she interrupted him hastily. "It's never any use interfering. It only makes things worse. It would be all the more difficult for me later on."

"And I want to see you do it, Maisie!" Brian was hopping feverishly about on the tips of his toes.

"Isn't he a nice boy?" Maisie gave her brother a glance of marked approval. "Do let me, daddy! It's the last I learnt, and I'll do it ever so well—really I will."

"But, my darling." Theodore was mechanically stroking her hair. "You can't do a skirt dance in your night gown."

"Oh, I haven't got a night gown." The child spoke with extreme eagerness. "I've got *other* things. But I had to put them on in *such* a hurry! All the *right* things—nearly all at least."

"Incorrigible little hedonist!" Theodore got up from his chair, and Mrs. Joyce went to the door. "I don't know what will become of you! Well, it must be a really short dance—really short, mind. We shall be later than ever for dinner."

Cyril was following Mrs. Joyce out of the room, but Maisie uttered a shrill cry of protest. "Don't go, Mr. Denison! How can you?" she asked with dramatic effect. Brian went over to him and seized his hands.

Maisie took off her dressing-gown and posed before her audience. From the waist to the knees she had "the right things," but the rest of her attire was less finished.

"Maisie!" exclaimed her father. "What an extraordinary costume!"

"Well, I thought it would be rather like evening dress."

"All the same, its rather engaging. Wait a minute." He went over to the piano. "I'll play for you."

"Yes—yes." Maisie was radiant. "Do play. That makes it easier. Rather slow, and rather soft. But watch me, then you'll know."

"Let's turn these lights off—ah—yes, that's better. Just the red light. Yes, that's the right effect."

Theodore sat at the piano and began to play slowly and softly.

The child danced—at first, as she had been taught, without much spontaneity, though with freedom and with grace. Theodore kept his eyes on her. Soon he changed his measure, his music was increasingly fast and loud. Maisie responded at once: her father's spasmodic impromptu playing quickened her excitement. Her movements grew wilder and wilder, she danced with more and more abandon; her eyes flashed, her lips parted in ecstasy, she was vibrant, you could see it in every nerve, pleasure was hers and she was pleasure's, with an intoxicating completeness.

Joyce watched her all the time, with sympathetic absorption; sometimes it seemed that his music followed her, sometimes that she followed his music. She began to show signs of exhaustion, she panted and quivered, but he went on. At last his expression suddenly changed, he seemed to suffer suddenly some sort of reaction, his eyes lost their eager light, the chords crashed, he stopped playing. Maisie stopped her dancing with a like abruptness and flung herself on the sofa.

Theodore wheeled round on his stool. "Divine!" he exclaimed. "Amazing!" He went over to Maisie and lifted her from the sofa. "My little princess! Princess of Judea!" He lingered with exquisite gusto on each syllable of the last word. "You shall dance for me again to-morrow."

"Oh!" the child gasped in his arms, "that wasn't the way I learnt it—but it was lovely all the same."

"Good night, darling," Theodore put her down. "Good night, Brian. Remember, she's Fragoletta now, and you're Prince Rupert."

"Isn't she Pannychis?"

Theodore laughed. "No, no. I won't have her called Pannychis. Now then, to bed, to bed!" He handed Maisie her dressing-gown, put one arm round her, the other arm round Brian, and brought them thus to the door. The children kissed their father and Cyril, and scampered away down the passage.

"Well," Theodore went on, "we must go and dress. You'll be ready first, Cyril. Insist on their beginning without me. The Colonel is more of a failure than ever, if he's been kept waiting, and I want you to have a good evening. Besides, I want to miss the soup. François often achieves, but never—somehow—with the soup. I can't understand it. It must be our English climate. Oh, tell me," he added, as they went out, "tell me, Cyril, do you ever by any chance make love to my wife?"

He stopped and regarded his secretary, who motioned with his hand in a detached, soft, deprecatory way.

"My dear Theodore!"

"Do," Theodore put his hand on his shoulder. "She'd be much easier to get on with if you did. Besides, that's really included in your duties."

"My dear fellow, you are absolutely shameless!"

They went out arm in arm, laughing.

VI

LATER in the evening, when the party had gone to the theater, Theodore Joyce was alone in his study. The study was on the ground floor, and opened into the hall. Over the fireplace hung a large ivory crucifix. The room abounded in pictures and statuettes of some distinction and quality, arranged with some nicety of taste. On the side furthest from the door was a grand piano, of smaller build than the one in the library. Near the door was a writing-bureau, and by it a bookcase, not large, and with the books disordered. A telephone was on a table near by.

Theodore, in evening dress with velvet smoking-jacket, stood by the bookcase, running his fingers over the backs of the volumes, taking and glancing at now one book and now another. He threw one on the nearest chair, took a cigarette from the box on the table, and lit it with deliberation. Then he went to the piano, opened it, ran through the top sheets of a pile of music in the case to the side, and placed Swinburne's "Leave-Taking" (Paston Cooper's setting) on the music-rest. He threw away his cigarette: it was a habit of his to throw cigarettes away very soon after they were lit. Then he took up the book from the chair and turned over the pages. After a minute or two he went back to the piano, took the sheet of music from the rest, read it through, then replaced it and sat down at the piano. He began to play, humming as he played, and occasionally singing a line or two, slurring the words, not quite sure of his notes.

After a while the door opened softly, and Nita Waveney stood listening. At first she did not stir; Theodore was

unaware of her, but soon he heard the rustle of her dress and her breathing. He turned, and stopped playing.

"Ah," he said, "you have come then."

"Yes." She moved slowly forward. "I was beginning to be bored. The house was so still—and then I heard you playing."

"Ha!" Theodore exclaimed lightly. "So I drew you with my music."

He paused, looking at her: she gave him a glance fugitive and insecure.

"I didn't think you would come," he said slowly.

"Perhaps you didn't want me to." She laughed shortly, she seemed a little embarrassed. "You let me go very easily."

"Was I afraid of you, do you think? I wonder."

"Oh, I don't see why you should be afraid of me."

"I am afraid of opportunities." Theodore turned from her and began fingering the keys.

"What do you mean by that?" she said quickly, in challenge. Her pale cheeks flushed.

He was silent. Then he rose and faced her, making as though he would stretch out his arms.

"I mean," he said, "that I hold out my soul"—he brought his hands together—"as a golden goblet in supplication to the Fates." He let fall his arms with a rapid dramatic movement, then he paused, looking straight before him with widening eyes. "I shrink from snatching the chalice from those changeless hands. Those shrouded, indifferent, unalterable forms! I dare not wrest their treasures. I will not grasp from them: let them give to me if they will, but, even so," he spoke very slowly and in a lower tone, "I will propitiate them by sometimes refusing."

The girl turned from him and moved, as though instinctively, a little away.

"There are not many men who feel as you do," she murmured. "You are very superstitious."

"I am superstitious!" he raised his voice. "But I am not alone. I am of a great brotherhood; and we have left

our footprints on the pathways of the world. A few of us are living yet—but we are most of us dead." His voice was richly-toned, charged with emotion. He went towards the girl. "We are most of us dead, Nita, my beloved."

"You are in a strange mood tonight." Again she drew away from him.

"Yes, don't let me touch you." He leaned lightly on the piano. "It is the hour of renunciation. Do you know, when you had gone to your room, and I was alone, how I triumphed! How wonderfully fine it seemed! To renounce the opportunity! To be able, and then to refrain! We two might be together—we two alone; and it was I who had spread forth the feast. It was I who had strewed the roses, and bound the myrtle to our brows; it was I who had melted the pearls in the wine; it was I who had touched the mouths of the singing-boys and the singing-maidens with that spiral flame! It was I who had set those lutes of gold between those fingers of ivory—ah, the ambrosial delights!" He paused and gazed at her. She sat, leaning forward, resting her chin on her hand, motionless, intent. Theodore resumed his harmonious modulations. "And then"—he bowed his head—"then, to depart: the wine undrunk, the feast untouched, the songs unsung, the music sunk in the soul because the lips were dumb!"

Nita moved her feet, rearranging thus the fall of her skirt, letting her white-laced edges show another way.

"But—" she hesitated. "This feast of yours? Really, now—how do you know that I should have . . . ?"

"Oh, Nita!" he made a swift, protesting gesture. "Don't spoil such an occasion." The higher notes of his voice came into petulant play. "Don't tell me that you would have rejected the myrtle! That would be unbearable. My renunciation faded to a mere mirage—"

It was difficult to tell whether his annoyance was real or affected. Nita frowned.

"As if I were willing," she said, in suppressed indignation, "eager—and then you left me. Why, it's horrible, it's—humiliating. I won't allow you to think that of me."

Theodore went to her and touched her shoulders delicately, with the tips of his fingers.

"Let us renounce together, my darling," he said caressingly. "Let us both offer our sacrifice upon that eternal altar."

"What altar?" she spoke brusquely, impatiently. "You mean that you're sacrificing yourself for the sake of Stella, for the sake of the children—for my sake?"

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" he moved away and sat down at a little distance from her. "Nita—" his tone was pained and remonstrant—"I entreat you—don't speak of my wife and my children! To refrain because of them—for that vulgar moral reason? Don't you see that for me this is a religious thing, that I stand now between my soul and my gods and my desire, and the world has no part in me? No sacrifice is worth making unless it is made for its own sake only. That gross material service of others desecrates it altogether. And you would throw the coal of my domestic hearth on that high pyre! Oh, it's grotesque. How you have disappointed me!"

Nita was stung. "What is the good of a useless sacrifice?" she asked defiantly.

Theodore rose, his eyes flashed, he replied with passion. "No sacrifice deserves the name unless it is useless!" He confronted her, with head thrown back, and dominating gesture. "A man must renounce for the heightening of his own sense and his own spirit, or he renounces in vain. We of the temples know nothing of the base and narrow uses of the streets. Their dust is not blown to our upper air." He waxed in rhetoric.

Nita left her chair and moved away from him to the wall, under the crucifix. She was conscious that the feet of the hanging figure almost touched

her hair. Her head drooped a little to one side, she touched the wall with the palms of her hands. "Surely"—she spoke uncertainly—"surely that is an inhuman creed. No one can live to himself."

"How I hate such phrases!" Theodore spoke with an approach to violence. "Every man *must* live to himself. It is this degenerate concern for others that has warped and degraded and distracted the spirit of our age. How many noble souls have fallen thus into the abyss! This entanglement in the meshes of the community!"

"I thought you were a socialist."

"I am. Because I believe that the state should take our responsibilities from us and leave us free as individuals to realize ourselves to the full. Let the burdens be carried by machines, not by men! I was converted to socialism by the arguments of its opponents. They talk of the lessening of moral responsibility: of eliminating the necessity of self-sacrifice—in its vulgar sense. That is just what I want. As things are, this community-net is tangled, chaotically spread round about us. None of us can help tripping up in it: it is a terrible nuisance. Let the net be straightened out, and kept in its right place, and"—he laughed a shade apologetically—"mended when it requires it by people who have had a scientific training for the job."

Nita glanced mockingly at him. "I never imagined," she said with a touch of malice, "that you were going to preach socialism to me to-night."

"Ah!" he took a step forward, and held out his hands towards her. "Forgive me. I am always trying to forget that we need it. You who stand in the shadow of the cross, forgive me!" he added, stirring her by this recognition of the effect of her pose.

"Everybody says," she continued to tease him, "that you're a man of pleasure. Evidently you don't deserve the reputation?" She left the "shadow of the cross."

"I am an ascetic *and* a man of pleasure." Theodore seized the opportunity

for the introspective eye of his self-absorption. "One must be both," he went on eagerly, "to be either fully. When I was a boy I used to go out alone—far away—over the roads and fields; and then in a solitary place I cut my arms with sharp stones. I remember crying in my pain, 'It's worth it! But it's worth it!' How well I understand that now. Pain and pleasure! Let us follow them all our lives."

"Are you," Nita spoke with well-timed timidity, "are you cutting yourself with sharp stones to-night?"

"My arms are bleeding." He theatrically raised them. "You know well enough, as you stand there, how I long to come to you, to put both my hands behind your head, crushing the sweetness from your deep, amazing hair! To drink the fragrance of your body like a draught of wine! To press my lips to yours, many times—and long kisses, Nita darling! Ah, how I would embrace you in fire and in tears!"

He had come nearer and nearer to her. She trembled and laid her hand on his arm.

"Don't say these things, Theodore," she whispered with intent. "I was wrong to come to you. Let me go."

He took her hand. "Yes," he said, with a curious, devoured look, "yes—so far—so far. It is given to me, I think, to touch your fingers."

She looked at him with an expression, involuntary, of baffled anticipation. It seemed to her that surely she was, that she must be, centrally placed, and yet, somehow, she could not be convinced of that—as she would; she could not understand.

"But I entreat you," he went on, "I entreat you, no more than that. If I kiss you, my dreams are scattered forever. And what dreams I have of you!" He looked up in ecstasy. "Myriads of dreams—with wings of amber, and of amethyst and of jacinth, they come floating to me, borne on their perfumed air! You have been mine in dreams—perfectly mine—as in our waking life you never could be." He

looked down and then, very softly, he added: "No more dream-kisses, if I kiss you now."

They were silent. Nita met his gaze with wondering, innocent eyes. She succeeded in looking like a child who is trying to understand. At the same time she was tremulous and shy, she caught her breath, and her bosom heaved, and when she spoke at last, she leaned her head a little to the side. The curve of her neck had heightened charm, as she stood thus.

"After you had kissed me"—her hesitancy was exquisitely provocative—"in those dreams—what then?"

"Shall I tell you? Shall I tell you?" He released her hand, then took it again, not so gently as before. His eyes darkened. "More and more ineluctably the net was stretched." He spoke with increasing excitement. "A little further, a little further yet." He seized her other hand. "Do you yield, my darling, do you yield? You would—you would not—ah, but now you will, you will! And you whispered"—he bent over her and almost touched her hair with his lips—"you whispered 'no'—no."

She further inclined her head, her ear touched her shoulder, her displayed neck showed lustrous, with its bright, clear flesh and delicate blue veins.

"Can I forget those moments of exquisite reluctance?" There was a break in her lover's voice. "Reluctance that at the last could speak *only in words*, while fevered petulant breath and amorous clasp and yielding limbs gave surrender! These are memories that are printed on my brain in letters of blood, and branded on my soul in characters of fire!"

He clenched her long hands violently in his, his mouth trembled, she felt his breath on her face.

"Let go my hands!" she cried, as though in sudden fear. "Let go my hands!"

"Nita!" He relaxed his grasp. "Don't tempt me. This is terrible. I should never have told you."

VII

"How you love talking!" She raised her head, and tried to laugh. "How you love *talking* of love!"

"And yet I am not a lover." He sighed, released her, and stepped back. "Well, I have chosen my path. I talk, but you see I do not kiss. I can dream, but I cannot embrace."

The look of baffled expectation reappeared in Nita's eyes.

"So this," she exclaimed in a tone from which she could not banish all trace of pique, "so this is why you make your sacrifice?"

She stood curved and drooped. Every allurement of her young yet immemorial figure was without effort there.

"Yes." Theodore scented danger. "And for myself alone. On the altar of my dreams. But not only that." He stood meditatively. "I am impelled by a certain mysterious fear. I believe in my gods. By them I am commanded."

"Yet you married Stella!"

"When I was very much younger—before I understood. But you know that for the first five years we had no children—"

"Don't say these things!" The girl flushed and frowned. "Don't say them."

"My marriage was a fatal mistake." Theodore continued calmly, deliberately. "It was a far greater degradation to me than any other act of my life."

Nita looked at him, hesitated, and then changed her tone.

"It hasn't made Stella happy, either."

"Oh," Theodore waved his hand a little impatiently, "I can't accuse myself of being unkind to her. I have been inexpressibly fettered. From the very beginning."

"You certainly take your captivity very lightly."

"What other way is there to take it? But I tell you, Nita"—he began to speak more rapidly, more emphatically—"it is shameful for a man to live with a woman after she has borne him a child. It is dreadful to me to think that

Stella has given me two children, and that we are still under the same roof. It is the vilest of degradations to me. I am bound to it as to a corpse, and it takes my own life from me."

"What terrible things these are to say!"

Nita had forgotten for the moment the art of her provocative convolutions, she stood very straight, she seemed to stiffen from head to foot. Her dark eyes were frightened. A suggestion that Theodore was rather, perhaps, in his way, a cad, protruded curiously in the background of her brain—a suggestion that she regarded as idly as she might.

"No woman could feel as you do," she added.

"I know." Theodore sank heavily into a chair. "That is the eternal tragedy. But every man feels something of what I feel. Every man." He leaned his chin on his hand and gazed at the floor. "Though most of them do not dare to admit it, even to themselves. Marry a man of that kind, my dearest child. Marry one of the many. They are the only safe men for women."

"You would like me to marry, then?"

"Yes. Does that sound strange to you?" He looked up as he heard her move towards him.

"If I did, would you dream of me still?"

"Oh, yes." He looked down, in deliberate disregard of her advance. He wished idly that women were not so perpetually concerned with sex-expression. Just then he wanted to talk. "But my dreams would change as you changed. And I want them to change."

"You think only of yourself."

"Yes. All ascetics are egoists."

"I have never realized before how different women are from men." She placed her hand very lightly on the back of his chair.

"No woman can be an ascetic," he spoke decisively—"no woman can be an egoist. And it is a mistake for a woman to marry a man who has not some of a woman's limitations. Men of my kind should be prevented from marry-

ing by law. Perhaps under a Socialistic State they will be."

"Are you so sure that I'm the kind of woman that ought to marry?"

"Why, what else can you do?" He turned and looked at her, surprised.

She drooped before his gaze. "Not dream as you do," she said hurriedly. "No, I couldn't do that."

"No, no." He got up and began walking about the room. "Those dreams are men's dreams, not women's. Women should be mothers. It took me five years to find out that."

"So you want me to marry a commonplace man?"

She was watching him, with secret, withdrawn eyes.

"I want you to marry Bernard Whatley."

"Oh, Bernie! But I find him extraordinarily dull."

"Then he's the right man." Theodore turned and stopped. "He's the ideal husband. Of course, you know he'd marry you like a shot if you asked him?"

"If I asked him!"

"Come, we're talking frankly. You know well enough that it's always the woman who asks. Why, you asked me to kiss you only a few minutes ago."

She glanced rapidly at him and lowered her eyes.

"I think you are too frank now."

"Well. Isn't Bernard willing to marry you?"

"Oh, yes." She looked bored.

"I know he is." Theodore came to her. He spoke eagerly. "I asked him only this afternoon why he didn't propose, and entreated him to do so."

"How dared you do such a thing?" She flushed and frowned again. "It was outrageous."

"My dear child, why? He needed encouragement."

Theodore spoke in his naïvest tone. Nita gave her head a little toss, moved away and stood half turned from Theodore, presenting her profile to him at great advantage.

"You are playing with me," she said, half protestingly, half plaintively, after

a pause. "You play with everybody. I don't believe you are serious in anything."

"I am very serious in my love for you." His tone had changed entirely: it was low, vibrant, intense. He came over to her, rapidly and silently. "If I were not I should kiss you; as you stand there I should kiss you on the mouth."

"Theodore!" She faced him, her head raised, her lips parted, her eyes moist. "I can't stay here with you any longer. All this—it is—I can't tell you how or why, but it is dreadful to me. It tortures me. Let me go."

He caught her lithe arm just below the wrist.

"I love you," he whispered. "I love you! Let me say again that I love you! So much, my Nita, that I begin to be afraid."

"I was afraid just now, when you held my hand, and I felt your breath on my cheek."

"Ah, Nita!" He let go her wrist, he almost flung himself from her. "Why are we not," he exclaimed with his-tronic pathos, "why are we not in the land of sunshine and song? Yes; if I could be with you there—you, with your warm Spanish name—Nita! Nita!—there where all shows bright—where everything takes life and colour from the sun, instinctively, by natural law, in fulness and in freedom! Those glittering courtyards, those scented gardens, those palmy places—each wall and roof of palace, of house, of hovel—how they hold, most deeply sunk, the very essence, the very soul, of that sunlight of the south! Ah, that heart is all of fiery gold. There I could dare to love you: there I could possess both you and my dreams."

He seemed to be profoundly stirred by his own eloquence, his voice trembled, his face was bright. He paused and then added, with stressed yet gentle resignation, "But not here, not here."

"I shall never be with you there," she murmured.

"I can see Seville!" He recaptured

his enthusiasm. "Her streets and her alleys, so gracious, so flexible, so sinuous in their curving lines. And the colour, the colour! Each street the petal of a flower! Palest yellows, my Nita—filmy greys, faint, delicate mauves, warmer mellowed browns. All bright in the sun! We shall go together."

He stood, looking upwards, lost in visionary ecstasy.

"Only in dreams." She moved very slightly towards him.

"In dreams! In dreams!" He fell more and more under the spell of his own imagination. "That Moorish art! With me you will pass between those tender and subtle columns, under that rarest tracery of arch and ceiling—all woven of gossamer films! The work of Ariel hands! There is the temple of my spirit!" He paused, looked at her, his voice shifted to its tenderest pitch. "We could be lovers there."

They stood gazing at each other in a prolonged silence. At last Nita leaned almost imperceptibly towards him. He took her pale hands, looked at her closely, earnestly, rather wonderingly, then suddenly he drew her to him and kissed her on the lips. At once he released her. She averted her face, covering it with her hands. She began to sob brokenly, but the upper air of conquest was bright round about her, she was satisfied there.

"Ah"—he withdrew, looking trapped—"that was a mistake for us, Nita. I should not have done that. Don't cry; if you cry you are irresistible—more irresistible than ever."

"I won't love you!" She trembled and stamped her foot. "It would kill me to love you. You are cruel—you are cold."

"I could be reckless now." He came back to her, and his eyes flashed. "I have kissed you. We will go together—far away! We will go to Seville."

Nita sank upon the music-stool with a tired gesture.

"You know"—her voice was dead—"we shall never go. You will stay—with Stella and the children. And I shall go back home. I shall go back

to that dreary place in Staffordshire, with all those dreary people."

"Dear me, yes," Theodore replied absently, "I know they are extraordinarily tiresome."

Nita raised her head and looked at him with wet, vexed eyes.

"You can't imagine," she cried petulantly, "how horrible it will be to me—how dull, how dull, how dull! It was bad enough before, but after this—"

"You talk as though you had never seen me before this visit."

Theodore had quite recovered his usual tone.

"Only twice," she replied quickly. "You don't often come to Chesney, and I'm sure I don't wonder. And when we met before it was different."

"I used to dream of you two years ago."

"I know you did, but—"

"Not as I dream of you now. That is true. I will be," he spoke very slowly, recalling a poem of Ernest Dowson's, "I will be faithful to you, Nita, in dreams."

"Oh, what is the use to me of dreams?" She got up. "I am going now."

"If I were not married"—he was still very gradual, very reflective—"if I had no children—"

"Oh"—she broke in half contemptuously—"I thought that didn't make the smallest difference to you."

She felt herself subdued to an unexpected shame, controlled by an inexplicable antagonism. Yet his kisses had given her, for the moment, an enveloping content; nor had the strong wave of that charmed satisfaction broken away from her senses.

"Listen, Nita, if I were free I should not be tempted as I am tempted to take you away with me."

"What?"

"Because then we should be tied. It would be the old bond in any case."

He put his hand on her shoulder.

Her shame quickened. She drew back.

"What's the use of discussing these

possibilities? Theodore, I'm not well. Let me go."

"Will you come with me now? Will you come?"

He spoke with feverish resolve, clasped her suddenly, held her in his arms, kissed her again and again.

"Will you come?" he cried passionately. "Are you mine, Nita, are you mine?"

She clung to him for a moment in an exultation less than half released and then she disengaged herself abruptly.

"But we can't," she said, "we can't. How can we? It is utterly impossible."

"Nothing is impossible now." He seemed triumphant. "The wine is poured into the goblet of gold. It is set to my lips. I must drink—I will drink."

"*We* will drink."

She looked into the distance. How was it that he showed still as this strange antagonistic animal?

"The red wine! The red wine! I tell you, Nita"—like a hierophant he raised his arms—"for your sake I will sink mountains into seas, I will change green rivers to greener valleys, I will smite the face of the desert with living lakes! I will master the world for you, my beloved."

He reached out his arms towards her and once more she drew back.

"But how shall we go?" she asked, bewildered and distressed. "Think—what difficulties! Would you take me now? And where? How?"

"Yes—now! now! This is the appointed time. Now we cannot draw back. I give all my life for this hour. Yes, I give all my soul. For this I will blaspheme my gods."

"But what will you do?"

He was silent.

"What will you do, Theodore, what will you do?"

"At once—at once. To wait would be fatal. We will leave the house."

"You must leave a note for Stella."

"Oh"—Theodore made a gesture of vexation—"how can I write? To write at this time!"

"It is absolutely necessary." Nita was authoritative. "You must write it and leave it for Stella—when she comes back."

"But why?"

He was impatient, almost peevish.

"You must. It is fair to her, and it will be better for us. For her sake and for our own you must make it as easy as possible for her to avoid a scandal—as much as she can."

Her face hardened.

Theodore slightly raised his shoulders and walked to the writing bureau. He was already chilled.

"Very well," he said, "I will write. Quickly! Quickly! What is the time?"

"Nearly a quarter past ten," Nita replied promptly.

"What shall I say?"

He sat at the bureau, playing with his pen.

"Put it as simply as possible."

"I have gone away with Nita," he hurriedly wrote the words. "Ah," he turned and looked at the girl, "I must tell her how much I love you—all that this means to me—"

"No, no!"

She could not suppress her irritation.

"Write simply, 'Nita and I have gone together. For your sake and the children's let there be no scandal!'"

Theodore obeyed.

"I write it," he said with a sigh, "but she will certainly know that the words are not mine."

"That's enough, I think. No, stop a minute. You must send for Wilmot. Tell him you have received an urgent message."

"But he'll know there's been no telegram or anything of that kind."

Theodore was evidently extremely depressed.

"You have a telephone." Nita spoke impatiently. "Stella should know what you have said to Wilmot."

"What shall I write, then?"

"I have told Wilmot that I am called away by an urgent message." Have you got that? "Nita's door is locked, and the key is in the top right-hand drawer of your *escritoire*." That is

all that need be said. You can send the address later if you wish."

The girl's emotions of shame, antagonism, triumph were scattered altogether. Her sentiency seemed absorbed by her purpose, which had become a thing apart from her, an animate thing to be served by her inanimate.

"There." Theodore put down the pen. "It is written. I am to give this to Wilmot?"

"Yes. We have very little time. I must go upstairs at once."

"Yes—your cloak."

"Of course, I must change my dress."

"Oh, Nita—my darling—he got up and went to her in pained entreaty—"don't do that. I want you to come with me as you are, as you have been with me this evening."

"Do please be reasonable, Theodore." She was almost hostile. "If you think a moment you must see that's impossible. Tell Wilmot to pack for you as quickly as he can—two things. I can't, of course, pack anything myself."

"Oh, these dreadful *arrangements!*" He leaned heavily, disconsolately, on the back of a chair. "They chill me, Nita, they chill me. Isn't it terrible to you?"

"There is no other way. Of course, you have money here?"

"Oh, yes."

He was melancholy beyond description.

"So have I. That is your cheque-book, isn't it? There in that pigeon-hole. Don't forget it."

"Oh, Nita, Nita!" He put the cheque-book in his pocket. "How I suffer! All the notes are struck out of tune."

"Put it in your breast pocket," she recommended, "it will be safer there."

"Oh, if only we could be in Seville—on the instant—by a wish! If only! But all these ugly things we have to do! That letter—Nita!" He called to her as she was going. "Mightn't it be better," he went on rather timidly, "to wait till Stella comes back? Not to slink away like this in the dark? Mightn't it be finer," he added lamely, "mightn't it be nobler?"

Nita turned angrily.

"How can you suggest it? How cruel of you! No, no; I will not see her! How could I do that? How could you wish me to do it?"

"Wouldn't it be easier for you—that way?" He pleaded; he was insinuating. "If we go now there must be some scandal. The servants—"

"You know I am independent." Nita's lips tightened. "I have considered all that. I accept the consequences. We are doing all we can. Is it you who are afraid?"

"What will Stella do?"

"She doesn't love you and you don't love her. You know that."

"Yes, yes." He began to revive. "But we—we are bound together by love! Gain—all gain—and no loss, no loss in the world!"

"Don't forget," she said as she went. "Two pieces of luggage."

"Yes, yes. But I shall miss Maisie."

He went on talking, not noticing that Nita had gone.

"I realize now how much we are all at the mercy of chance. I think all the gods are dead."

VIII

He sat down, put his hands to his head, then looked round the empty room. An expression of repugnance passed over his face as he remembered that he had to ring for Wilmot. He touched the bell as though it were something unclean. Then he lit a candle and carefully sealed the letter to his wife, making a ritual of the business. This done, he lit a cigarette with unsteady fingers and almost immediately threw it away. The butler appeared. Theodore turned and started.

"Oh—Wilmot," he said. "I have to leave the house at once. An urgent message—by telephone," he added with an effort.

"Yes, sir," observed the man, unmoved.

"Will you pack immediately? And give this note to Mrs. Joyce when she returns."

He lit another cigarette.

"Very good, sir. When do you start, sir?"

Theodore tapped nervously on the bureau.

"As soon as possible. Pack as quickly as you can."

Wilmot stepped back.

"Will you be gone long, sir?" he asked suavely.

"Oh, I don't know." Theodore was irritable. "I can't tell."

"I only wished to know how much I am to pack, sir."

"Two pieces of luggage."

"Two pieces, sir. Will you have the car out, sir?"

"No, no."

"Shall I call for a taxicab, sir?"

"Yes. And put the luggage into it as soon as ever you can. Call it—let it wait."

He put his hand to his forehead, evidently in distress.

"I shall let myself out, Wilmot. You needn't trouble."

"Very good, sir." The man bowed. "I shall not be longer than ten minutes."

Theodore, left alone, walked about the room. He stopped in front of a mirror, looked at himself, then began to meddle with his tie, readjusting it, unfastening it, then retying it. Then he went to the bureau, unlocked a drawer and took banknotes from it. He opened other drawers, looking hurriedly through the papers in them. He was all the time painfully harassed, acutely discomfited, the anxiety of his expression accentuated itself more and more. At intervals he exclaimed, under his breath, "Oh, I hate doing it! How I hate doing it!" And "I know I shall do it badly—oh, so badly!" And again, "It is so difficult—all so difficult." Finally he shut the bureau, leaving the key in the lock. He turned to the bookcase, and, after review, put one small volume in his pocket. As he stood looking in vague suspense at the door, it was opened by Matthew, the footman, who carried a little pile of clothes, with two or three ties and a tie-clip, neatly

arranged on the top. Theodore's jaw dropped.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Matthew, "but Wilmot thought you might wish to change your clothes here, while he and Robert were packing—seeing you are pressed for time, sir."

"Very well, very well."

Theodore closed his mouth with an effort, and made an attempt to look decisive and dignified. Matthew glanced inquiringly at him, then took the coat from the pile and shook it out. Theodore began to take off his smoking-jacket very deliberately.

"Shall I change the pockets, sir?" Matthew inquired.

Theodore started, looked at him suspiciously, then took some things out of his pockets and gave them to the footman, who put them in the pockets of the other coat.

"Which tie, sir?"

"Any one will do."

Matthew handed him a tie. Theodore took off his coat and waistcoat, arranging this tie in place of the other.

"Yes, yes," he said hurriedly, when the tie was in position, "give them to me. I won't change any more than this."

The man helped him on with the other waistcoat and coat, then went to the door and opened it. The noise of a motor was heard. Matthew turned.

"The taxicab is here already, sir. Shall I put these things in the suitcase, sir?"

He indicated the smoking-jacket and dress waistcoat.

"Wilmot and Robert are bringing down the luggage."

"Yes." Theodore looked extraordinarily grave and preoccupied. "Put them in if you like."

Matthew left with the clothes, and Theodore almost immediately went to the door, calling "Wilmot!"

"Yes, sir." Wilmot's voice came from outside, "the luggage is quite ready, sir."

"Bring me my coat, Wilmot."

He walked back to the fireplace. Wilmot came in with the overcoat without

delay and began helping his master into it.

"The taxicab is waiting?" Theodore inquired as he put his arms in.

"Not yet, sir. Robert is just going to call it."

"But Matthew said it was there—"

Theodore stopped, bewildered, with his coat half on.

"He was mistaken, sir," said Wilmot quietly, continuing to help with the coat as best he could.

Theodore broke away from him, almost with violence.

"But I heard it outside," he exclaimed. "I hear it now. Don't you hear it?"

"It has not been called yet, sir."

Wilmot's certainty was exasperatingly calm.

"Listen." The throbbing of the motor was unmistakable. "It is there."

Wilmot went out. Theodore shuffled on his coat impatiently; he looked about him with wide eyes of apprehension, listening to sounds that came from the hall. In a few moments the man came back.

"Yes, sir," he said, "Mrs. Joyce has returned, sir."

Theodore started violently; he gave an exclamation. Looking up, he saw his wife in the hall, coming towards the open door of the study. He advanced to meet her, as the butler withdrew.

"What a relief!" he cried, as they encountered at the door. "My darling, thank heaven; what a relief! Oh, Wilmot," he went on, catching sight of the man's retreating figure, "you are not to give that note, do you hear, Wilmot?"

"Oh, no, sir." Wilmot turned, decorous as ever. "Of course, not now, sir. Shall I tell the taxicab to wait, sir?"

"No, no."

"Very good, sir."

He made a little bow and disappeared.

"Well?" Mrs. Joyce closed the door. "Where are you going?"

She looked at him without perceptible curiosity.

"Away! away!" He gestured wildly.
"To Spain! To Seville!"

"Well, you won't need a fur coat there."

She sat down, evidently very much tired.

"I wondered why there was luggage in the hall. I didn't realize it was yours."

She spoke very quietly.

"I shall go to the world's end."

Theodore advanced with head raised.

"No more doubts or hopes or faith or fears."

"Well"—she loosened her cloak—"I hope you can spare a few minutes before you start. Purely on matters of business. It will be so very inconvenient to have to do it all by correspondence, particularly if you are at the world's end. I left the theater before the last act because I had a splitting headache."

"Chance again—always chance!"

"Well, perhaps it's rather lucky. Not that I attach any sentimental importance to saying good-bye. But it will be so much simpler and easier if I know—roughly—what you are going to do. What are you going to do?"

She looked up at him.

"Let's go to Spain! Come with me to Seville! We'll take Nita with us. Why not? I've been telling her about Seville; she'd like to go."

He spoke very rapidly, with a hectic excess of excitement.

"Let's start to-night. We should be in Paris to-morrow morning, over the frontier by to-morrow night. To-morrow—why, to-morrow we might sleep in San Sebastian! What a wonderful name! Then we would go on to Madrid—nothing can be more important than Velasquez—and then to Seville! Wouldn't it all be amazing—simply amazing!"

"How about the children?"

Mrs. Joyce had listened, quite unimpressed.

"Oh, take them, too. Why not? I will teach Maisie how to dance with castanets. I'll get her a mantilla and a comb for her hair and spangled gar-

ments. And Nita shall have a rich embroidered shawl. How divine! How they'll enjoy the warmth and the sunshine! Yes. Why, Spain will suit Maisie capitally—you see, she is really—"

He broke off with a sudden frightened look. A cry of terror—half cry, half scream—came upon Mrs. Joyce from behind. Turning, she heard her name called. Nita stood in the doorway; Nita in outdoor dress, with a heavy veil and carrying a small parcel. "Stella!" she cried again. "Theodore!"

Then she swayed and fell to the floor. Theodore ran to her in consternation.

"Come!" he cried. "Come to her, Stella! Help her! Bring water—brandy!"

Mrs. Joyce rose. Nor did she now betray emotion.

"Be calm, Theodore," she said. "It's the best thing she could have done under the circumstances."

"My God!" Theodore bent down over the girl. "See—you see—she has really fainted. How deplorably gauche!"

IX

At about ten o'clock the next morning, in the same room where these events had happened some twelve hours before, Robert, Theodore's second footman, was mending the fire at his leisure. His colleague, Matthew, entered with the unobtrusiveness of his profession, carrying newspapers and magazines. Robert looked up.

"How about the books, Matthew?" he asked lazily. "Shall I do anything to them?"

"No."

Matthew replied with all the authority of a servant to his inferior.

"Leave them as they are. He doesn't like them touched."

He closed the piano.

"Right you are."

Robert pointed slyly to a couple of pictures by the bookcase, copies of Goya's "Woman of the People," nude and clothed.

"How does she suit you best, Matthew, costumed or *au naturel*?"

"Don't be vulgar." Matthew sniffed fastidiously. "Those pictures are high art."

"Everything in this room is high art, isn't it?" observed Robert meekly. "Wonder how much money it all cost."

"He doesn't count the cost."

Matthew spoke with a fine air of generosity, as though it were he himself who was not counting the cost.

"Very liberal-handed gentleman, Mr. Joyce."

He sat down in an armchair.

"Wonder what he's got?" Robert enquired after a pause.

"Well," Matthew reflected a moment, stretching his limbs. "He *spends* seven thousand a year if he spends a penny."

"Seven thousand a year!" Robert dropped the tongs. "And to think how nicely the two of us could do on the interest of that money! It don't seem fair, Matthew." He scratched his head. "It don't seem right."

Matthew stared at him with marked disapproval.

"I hope you're not a Socialist, Robert."

"Why," rejoined Robert brightly, "that's what *he* is, isn't *he*?"

"Oh, that's different. With him it's a hobby."

Robert returned to the tending of the fire.

"Now, when I say he spends seven thousand a year," Matthew resumed in a tone of deliberation, "that isn't saying he's got an income of seven thou. You can't judge of what a man's got by what he spends, Robert. It's my experience that those who spend freely haven't got what they spend. And those who think twice over parting with a sovereign, they've got more than they part with." He raised his finger impressively. "When you've been longer at this you won't go judging by appearances."

Robert stood up and leaned against the mantelpiece.

"He won't go bust, will he?" he said

apprehensively. "No fear of that, I hope. It's a good place. I know that, though I'm only a new arrival."

"I can't speak of what I don't know, Robert. But I don't mind telling you that old Wilmot has his suspicions, and he's freely expressed 'em to me."

There was a pause, and then Robert asked significantly: "How's the young lady this morning?"

"I haven't heard." Matthew's impressiveness was accentuated. "And I haven't asked. It's a delicate matter, Robert."

"Very funny sort of a job, last night, eh? What do you think?"

"It's not my business to think anything, Robert."

Robert grinned.

"No more it ain't mine, but we think all the same, don't we, Matthew? Must say I never thought he was a real wrong'un before."

"He's eccentric, Robert." Matthew lowered his voice. "Very eccentric."

"Not like other girls, Matthew, what?"

Robert winked gravely and Matthew laughed.

"That's unkind, Robert, very unkind," he said patronizingly. "Smart, but rather crook. Not but what there ain't some truth in it. He's not my beau ideal of a manly man—of a real Englishman, as you might say. Not by any manner of means."

"He's what you might call a strong man, ain't he, I don't think."

"Not much bloomin' strength about him." Matthew was relaxing. "You ought to've seen him last night." Again he lowered his voice. "I come in—he got up and walked to the door to make his narrative the more dramatic—"I come in here at this door with his clothes. He standing just in that very spot where you are now. And when I come in he jumps—like as if he has St. Vitus. Painful to witness, Robert." He advanced a few steps. "Then he took off his jacket, and I said—standing right here where I am now—'Shall I change the pockets?' I said, and he jumps again. His nerves

were all to pieces. Of course, nothing hadn't really happened then, but I knew something was up."

"And you kept your eyes open, what?"

Again Robert slowly winked.

"Don't you be so personal. Then I said—standing here—'Which tie will you take?' and he snaps out 'Any one will do,' just as if he was tryin' to keep from burstin' into tears. 'Yes, yes,' he says, 'give them to me.' It was quite distressin', I give you *my word*."

"I can't help thinking it's a bit rough on the missus."

Robert cocked his head reflectively to one side.

"Ah"—the other nodded sympathetically—"she has a lot to put up with, pore lady, a lot to put up with."

Wilmot came in upon them, velvet-footed.

"Now, then," he said, sharply and yet pompously, "there's no occasion for you two to be here together. There are duties awaiting you elsewhere, Robert—and you, too, Matthew."

"Quite so, Mr. Wilmot."

Matthew was very brisk and businesslike.

"There's too little discipline in this house altogether," the butler went on. "The establishment doesn't work together as it should. Some have some duties, others have others. Keep to your own work, and do it as you should. Then you won't be doing other peoples'. Now be off. Your master and Mr. Denison are just coming in here."

"What, already?" chirped Robert. "Why, it ain't half past ten yet."

"It isn't half past ten yet, Robert. What of that?"

Wilmot fixed a magisterial eye upon his subordinate.

"He's very irregular in his habits," Matthew threw in as an aside to Robert, whereupon Wilmot transferred his glassy gaze.

"You heard what I said, Matthew."

The two footmen went out. Wilmot drew a heavy breath. He began to move seriously about the room, shifting slightly the position of a chair or

a table here and there, giving the artistic touch to the arrangement of the statuettes. In two or three minutes Cyril Denison came in, smoking a cigarette.

"Beginning work early this morning, Wilmot," he remarked in his offhand way. "Great deal to get through, Theodore says. Heaven knows what. I hope he isn't taking to writing letters again."

"I hope not, sir. That is, for your sake, sir."

"Frightful nuisance." Cyril took out a newspaper and sat down in an armchair. "He dictates so badly."

He opened the paper. Wilmot stood in hesitation.

"Excuse me, sir," he broke the pause, "I've already seen the president of the Ethical Society about your coming to us. He—er—received the prospect with the greatest enthusiasm."

"Don't, Wilmot." Cyril spoke without looking up. "You make me nervous."

"Would next Sunday suit you, sir?"

"Say Sunday week. I always like to make engagements for Sunday week."

"Meetings for debate are only held every third Sunday, sir. If it can't be next Sunday, may we say Sunday month?"

"Sunday month!" Cyril put down his paper. "Delightful! I've never made an engagement for Sunday month before."

"The subject for that evening is 'The Higher Ministrations of Victorian Poets.' We may consider it settled, then, sir?"

"Certainly, certainly. With all the pleasure in the world."

"Much obliged to you, sir."

"Much obliged to you, Wilmot."

"Oh, don't put it like that, sir."

X

THEODORE came in and Wilmot disappeared.

"Now, then, Cyril!" Theodore exclaimed, "to work! to work! I am positively overflowing with energy."

He was in his most debonair mood, and seemed to have dressed accordingly. He wore a light-gray, loose lounge suit, with a silk collar and a carelessly knotted violet tie. The two bottom buttons of his waistcoat were undone. His hair was ordered with appreciably less nicety than on the evening before; a pleasant curl fell over his forehead and there was a stray tendril or two about his ears. He was nonchalant, without being in the least disheveled.

Cyril looked up and took him in.

"So you've given up the idea of the motor trip this morning?" he inquired blandly.

"Yes, that's off. Nita has to leave us by a morning train."

"Indeed." Cyril threw his paper onto the table. "That's unexpected, isn't it?"

"Yes. Her uncle is very unwell, I am sorry to say."

He went to the writing bureau and opened it. Then he opened one of the lower drawers.

"I want to run through a whole lot of manuscript this morning, Cyril. Most of my stuff is here, isn't it? What have you got in the library?"

"Nearly all political stuff, I fancy; except that poem you wrote yesterday and one or two other things. We were exclusively political when we last—"

"When we last stopped work? Ah, well, now we must begin again."

Theodore was cheerful, brisk, placid.

"And I think now we shall be exclusively literary. Those verses I wrote yesterday heralded a revival."

He opened another drawer an' took a bundle of papers from it.

"What are these? Ah—poems, poems. All of them rejected, Cyril?"

"Yes." Cyril got up. "Those right-hand drawers are all for rejected MSS. Also the two bottom drawers on the left-hand side."

"H'm. Quite a lot of accommodation."

"The names of the rejecting journals or magazines are written in red ink on little slips attached by paper-fasteners."

"Why, so they are!" Theodore examined the papers curiously. "Very

neatly done, Cyril, very neatly done!"

He opened another drawer.

"Why, here's the play I wrote the spring before last, when I was at Capri. 'Milk of Paradise.' Let me see, three acts was it, or four?" He turned the leaves. "Why, there are *five* of them! I quite forgot I had been so lavish. Can't we do anything with 'Milk of Paradise,' Cyril?"

"I'm afraid it's been to every actor-manager in London."

"Unconsciousable dogs, these actor-managers! It's a very good play."

He turned the pages again, and then looked up at Cyril.

"Why," he cried with a flash of enthusiasm, "even now it gives me pleasure!"

"We might try America—or—" Cyril hesitated, and then added desperately, "the Colonies."

"H'm. I don't care about that."

Theodore went on reading as he talked.

"I should feel like a purveyor of some kind of antipodean claret."

He put down the manuscript and opened another drawer.

"Oh, these are terribly dusty—Prose Poems—Symbols; with an 'S,' not a 'C.' Takes one back to the early nineties."

Cyril lit another cigarette.

"Yes," he agreed, "Prose Poems and Symbols are a bit played out nowadays."

"I shall start on something fresh."

Theodore grasped a handful of the manuscripts and threw them on the table. They made a little cloud of dust.

"I can't revise," he went on, "never could. Once a thing's done, it's done. There it is. I tell you, Cyril"—he spoke with animation—"the idea of revising fills me with indescribable repugnance. So sapless, so dreary! But you might take all this stuff into the library. I'll work here. Pick out anything that takes your fancy and then we'll send it somewhere where it hasn't been before. The others you might arrange for publication. I'm rather tired of publishing, though. They always

make me pay a great deal too much, and Mrs. Joyce doesn't care about that."

"Shall I start on the verse or the Prose Poems?"

Cyril flicked the pile of papers delicately with his handkerchief.

"Oh, don't trouble about the Prose Poems. I'm tired of the idea of them. Take the verse and some of the shorter plays—oh, and a few short stories. Where are they?"

"This is the short-story drawer."

Cyril leaned forward over Theodore, opened the drawer and took manuscript from it.

"Be careful with them!" Theodore raised his finger. "Some of them may have been accepted. I distinctly remember having one accepted—or even two. But I don't think any of the plays were."

"Shall I take 'Milk of Paradise'?"

"No." Theodore continued in his tone of amiable badinage. "You mustn't read that by daylight. Let's see"—he opened yet another drawer—"here are the shorter plays. Dear me, what a lot of them! But I always write so quickly."

He turned them over.

"Ha, what's this? 'Lapis Lazuli: A Play in Which Nothing Happens.' You might look that through. I seem to remember another: 'A Play in Which Everything Happens.' But I forget the title. Well, now, Cyril, dear boy, you've got enough to go on with."

He looked up and saw Mrs. Joyce, who had just come in.

"Ah, good morning, dear. We're all about early today. Cyril and I are going to do no end of work. See the burden I've laid upon him!"

He waved his hand towards Cyril, who had taken up a pile of manuscript.

Mrs. Joyce advanced.

"Good morning, Mr. Denison," she said. "Do get Wilmot or somebody to carry those papers to the library for you."

"Oh, no, thanks," Cyril smiled sweetly. "I can easily manage them. I hope your headache is quite gone."

"Oh, yes, thank you."

"You really ought to have let me see you back."

"Oh, no, it was better not." She paused. "I should have been sorry to have quite broken up the party."

"What's Bernard Whatley's telephone number, Cyril?" Theodore was still at the bureau. "Do you remember?"

"Three thousand Chelsea."

"How delightful of him! What a simple and beautiful number! Three thousand Chelsea."

He repeated it slowly and softly with extreme relish.

"It is perfect. It is bewitching. Three thousand Chelsea."

Cyril went out and Theodore turned to his wife.

"Excuse me, dear, one moment. I'm just going to telephone to Whatley."

"Oh, what for?"

"I want him to see Nita before she goes."

He took down the receiver.

"I don't think that would be at all wise—for either of them. I shouldn't telephone if I were you."

"Three thousand Chelsea," Theodore spoke into the receiver. "How adorable! . . . Yes. . . . She doesn't say it at all nicely."

"But, anyhow," Mrs. Joyce continued, "there probably won't be time for him to get here before she goes. So it doesn't matter."

"Is that you, Whatley?" Theodore had his connection. "Yes—Theodore Joyce. Can you come round here this morning? Nita has to leave by a morning train. . . . Yes, her uncle is most unwell. So unfortunate. But you really must see her before she starts. Obviously very important. . . . Oh, I don't know what time her train goes."

"Eleven fifty-five from Euston," Mrs. Joyce told him.

"Oh, yes," he went on, "you'll just do it if you start at once. What a beautiful telephone number you've got. . . . Good-bye."

He put back the receiver.

"If you'd told him the time the train

started, he might have seen her at Euston."

"Oh, but that wouldn't do." Theodore turned round. "I want them to meet here."

"I should like to have a few minutes with Nita before she goes." Mrs. Joyce spoke after a pause. "I have sent a note to her room, asking if she will see me. I wanted to tell you this."

"Why? See her by all means. Why not?"

"Very well, then. Only I wanted you to know, I don't want to see her and to talk to her about you without your knowledge."

"My dear girl"—he leaned back in his chair and stretched his arms—"talk about me to her as much as you like. The franker you are the better. But surely you don't think that I haven't been frank with her myself. I am pretty frank with everybody, I think. There's nothing you can tell her about me that she doesn't know already."

XI

THE door opened and Nita came in dressed for traveling. Seeing Theodore, she stopped, looking chagrined and embarrassed. He rose, without any concern at all, and went towards her.

"Ah, there she is. But—my dear child—you look so pale." He regarded her. "Almost faded. Like a tired lily leaning to the stream. A blank verse—ha!"

Nita turned to Mrs. Joyce.

"I went to your room," she said in a strained voice, "but they told me you were here. I expected to find you alone."

"Theodore—"

Mrs. Joyce looked at him.

"Oh, certainly." He moved away. "I'll go. But take all this lightly, I entreat you. Take it lightly."

He paused with his hand on the door-knob.

"It is the only way to take anything in life," he added, and went.

Neither woman looked at the other.

"I am sorry Theodore was here," said

Mrs. Joyce when the door had closed.

"They told me he was in the library with Mr. Denison or I would not have come here." Nita sat down. "You have a special reason for wishing to see me?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Joyce sat also.

"Wouldn't it have been better"—the girl hesitated and frowned—"better for me to have gone—in silence? Both of us silent."

"I haven't much to say"—the woman looked at her—"but I feel I ought to say it."

"But why?" Nita's tone was dulled. "Everything is done now. It is all over—over for always—"

"For you, perhaps, but not for me. I have to live with him still."

"Oh"—Nita moved impatiently—"I know I have wronged you. I told you that last night, though I wasn't hypocrite enough to ask your forgiveness."

"Nita"—Mrs. Joyce spoke with a tinge of annoyance—"I won't have this rôle of the wronged wife thrust upon me, at this time of day, I mean, as though it were a rôle new to me—as though it were you who had made me play it."

"What do you mean?"

Nita met her gaze.

"I mean that I have been wronged for sixteen years—ever since you were a little child."

She was still unemotional, but very clear, very firm.

Nita looked away.

"Did you send for me to tell me this?" she asked uncomfortably.

"To recite my woes? No. But I wished you to understand the situation, to understand my point of view. I wished to tell you that I should not have the smallest objection, for my own sake, to your going away with Theodore, that you are at perfect liberty to go away with him now, so far as I am concerned."

"Now?" Nita's lips parted; she looked scared. "It is impossible now."

"The telegram to Uncle Gilbert has not been sent yet."

"Why not, then?"

The girl was in evident agitation.

"I kept it back purposely. If you want to go away with Theodore, you can go this morning."

There was a pause, and then Nita said in a low voice: "No. Not now."

"Would he go, do you think?"

The girl's eyes flashed angrily; she was in a moment scarlet.

"That is not generous of you, Stella!" she cried. "It is not generous."

"I am sorry. But I think you are wise not to go with him, whether he will or no. If you had both been willing I should have thought it best to tell you why I should have regretted it on your account. Now that is not necessary."

"Tell me." Nita leaned forward. "In any case tell me."

"It is not necessary."

"But tell me."

Mrs. Joyce slightly shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you, Nita," she replied, "without speaking of myself—of my life with him. And I don't want to do that without good reason—simply to gratify curiosity."

"We are sisters. Is it wrong that I should know?"

"There are things"—Mrs. Joyce spoke slowly—"between husband and wife—that a wife doesn't speak of, even to her sister. And—my dear Nita—we are scarcely sisters in the ordinary sense. We are almost strangers. I married when you were hardly out of your cradle. We have seen less of one another than of many who are mere acquaintances."

"That is certainly true." Nita spoke in an almost drawing-room tone, a tone of conventional interest. "It has always struck me as a peculiar relationship."

"But even if we were strangers, utterly and completely, I should be glad"—Mrs. Joyce now made demand upon her self-control—"that you have escaped from him."

"Escaped from him!" Nita looked closely at her. "Do you really think that he is such a wicked man?"

"It is not the wicked men, as people count wickedness, who do the most to make women wretched. No, I shouldn't call Theodore wicked."

Her calm was now less strained.

"But you hate him?" asked Nita eagerly.

"I hated him once, as passionately as I had loved him. But I don't hate him now. I have got past that. There is no hatred left in me now—for him. But I did hate him during five years of torture."

"Ah, yes," Nita broke in quickly, "he spoke to me of that."

"To you?" The woman stared at her, amazed. "Impossible. But no," she paused, "not impossible for him."

"I am sorry. I should not have told you that."

"Oh, it doesn't matter. Nothing that could happen could make very much difference to me now. I can no more hate him again than I can love him again. It is all—burnt out. I have only one desire left—to part from him."

"But he is not happy with you, either. Couldn't you arrange—?"

"Oh, he told you that. Yes, but he wouldn't separate, if it came to the point. It would be too much trouble. He wouldn't like the effort of it. Besides, he is happy in his way. He has what many people would call a happy temperament."

Nita rose and went over to the window.

"But could you not separate from him, none the less?"

She tapped the pane nervously.

"If he were a wicked man I could. The law is not unkind to wives of wicked men—in our class. But it's not altogether hopeless. Some way may be found." She reflected for two or three moments. "You know he spends a great deal of money. Much more than his income. This last year, so far as I can guess, nearly twice as much. Oh, not all on himself. He's fond of giving away. And this has been going on for some time. In the end there must be—disaster."

"And then?"

"Oh, I have a little money of my own, as you know. He can't touch that. Just enough to bring up the children. I think things will be happier then, for me and for them."

"Yes," Nita turned and spoke rapidly, "I know he spoils them fearfully, and I'm afraid I—"

"Spoils them!" Mrs. Joyce's face hardened, her tone was bitter and indignant. "He is ruining them: especially Maisie. It's not the ordinary spoiling. I know what the result will be. Perhaps if Theodore himself hadn't been a spoilt child—but his parents didn't harm him as he harms Maisie and Brian. And every day this must go on! Ah, it will be too late!"

She flushed.

"But could you not do something?" Nita moved towards her. "Is Theodore so strong-willed?"

"Am I so weak, do you mean? My dear, it isn't the strong-willed man who baffles us women. It is the man who is irredeemably selfish, the man who is controlled—possessed—by the desire of gratifying his own sensations. That desire is stronger than any resistance. At least I have found it so. Perhaps other women—another kind of woman—"

"But you, with your practical sense—"

"I am helpless." She spoke dispassionately again. "You don't know, you can't guess how helpless. But I am not so bitter now. You see, I can talk fairly calmly now of these things. I can even see the inevitability of it all. I can see that Theodore is—must be—at the mercy of his own nature. Nothing in the world could make him realize the suffering he has caused me. There are some people, Nita, who will tell you that suffering purifies and strengthens. That is not always true. But no, he is not a wicked man. I suppose he was born without a conscience, without the sense of right or wrong. That makes it all the more hopeless for me. I have often thought that if he had not been well off, things might not have been so bad. But yet—I don't know."

They were silent. Nita's face was drawn, and her eyes were troubled. Her lips twitched now and again.

"So your one hope now," she broke the pause rather timidly, "is in his extravagance. But why is it, then, that you are always trying to get him to be less reckless? I remember he told me that you almost had a quarrel because he insisted on putting a grand piano into nearly every room in the house."

"Oh, I can't push him over the cliff," Mrs. Joyce replied indifferently. "It would be—well, rather mean, at any rate. If he were dying, you'd expect me to do what I could to save him, wouldn't you? Well, this is just the same."

Nita burst into tears.

"Why, Nita! I am sorry."

Mrs. Joyce rose, moved a step or two towards the girl, then hesitated.

"I'm afraid I have distressed you by talking about myself."

"No—no," the girl sobbed. "But you are so much—so much nobler than I could ever be."

"My dear child! I have never felt less noble in my life."

She came nearer.

"Perhaps"—Nita straightened herself and dried her eyes—"perhaps—some day—you will meet with a man who will—who will make up to you a little for all you have gone through."

"So that is your remedy." Mrs. Joyce smiled and put her hand on the girl's shoulder. "You wouldn't say that unless you were very young. I am quite sure that I shall never marry again or love again."

Again they were silent. Nita looked straight before her, thinking, remembering; very pale, very grave. Her sister moved away with a suppressed sigh. After a few minutes Wilmot appeared and announced that the car was waiting.

"I will go, then," said Nita, as the butler left, "I am glad you sent that note to me, Stella. We can say good-by now, and before—" she caught her breath—"I felt that I could never speak

to you or see you again. I don't feel that now."

"I never felt that."

"Oh—one thing."

Nita looked down and described little semicircles on the carpet with the toe of her shoe.

"I have been very selfish. I mean that the servants must know—something about last night. It will be painful for you, I'm afraid. I am very sorry."

"My dear Nita!" The other smiled. "Do you think I find things of that kind painful, after all these years? Besides, the servants' suspicions will provide another sensation for Theodore. He will certainly enjoy the situation. So, you see, it will be something to him and nothing to me."

They walked towards the door together.

"By the bye," Mrs. Joyce went on, "he was providing another sensation for himself this morning. He telephoned to Bernard Whatley to come here and see you before you left."

"What?" Nita turned and stopped. "That is incredible. That was shameful of him."

"My dear," Mrs. Joyce spoke lightly, "things of that kind aren't at all incredible with Theodore, or even shame-

ful, perhaps. But I felt sure Bernard couldn't be here in time."

"Good-bye." Nita had her hand on the door. "You will send that telegram?"

"At once. I shall be glad to send it."

Nita felt the door-handle turn and drew back. The door opened and Theodore confronted her.

"So you are just going!" he cried. "Already? Is it so soon?"

The girl looked steadily at him without changing her expression.

"These partings! These disappearances!" he went on without pause. "They always touch me with the sense of white arms stretched out imploring—stretched out in vain, in vain, from the other side of the waters of Lethe!" He looked round him. "And to think that this is the same room! So goodbye, good-bye!"

Nita turned away and went out past him, followed by Mrs. Joyce. Theodore watched them as they went, and gave a gentle wave of his hand in depreciation. He walked from the door towards the bookcase.

"Well—" he murmured, "there it is! Women—never any sense of art—and all my delicate touches—my philosophy—"



LEAVES FROM A BOOK OF DREAMS

By John Hanlon

I

I HAD rather be deaf than know that your voice did not soften, sweet as the drone of bees, when you mentioned my name.

II

I had rather the width of the world lay between us than that our hands could touch without being thrilled by each other.

III

I had rather be dead, and lie alone in the darkness, than know, if I lived, that your love were given to another.



ABOVE BROADWAY

By Morris Gilbert

THE Devil took three men—a Cynic, a Libertine, and a Poet—up into the Times Building and bade them look down into the square and tell him what they saw.

This is what the Cynic said:

"Look! A wonderful glistening maze, pulsing. . . . A magic world spread before us with walls of jasper lit from the stars, with floors of black syenite that reflect and splash a myriad brilliants. . . . It is the bosom of civilization decked with the mazement of life . . . it is the champagne of the world with every sparkle a burst of joy.

"It is the beginning and the end of dreams. It is the realization of the inconceivable and the apotheosis of the common-place. . . . I see loveliness and beautiful gayety walking in splendor with the worth of living at their side. I see laughter and sweet tears, both beautiful things. I see the opening of a vista which never ends."

The Devil looked at the Cynic and smiled. "You are a true Cynic," he said.

This is what the Libertine said:

"Look! Below is a seething, carnal mass, a hideous pageant of mockery, lit by the flare of burnt-out sin. . . . See the million garish lights, each one a wretched candle pitifully offered for souls in limbo. . . . The glitter is a lie, the brightness is a lie so that sin need not walk in darkness but may hide itself in light.

"I see evil walking in scarlet with desire at her side. I see a crawling, scurrying *folle*—each meagre unit seeking

craftily its own crabbed lust. . . . There is no good thing there, only horrible things are there. Beauty is turned to madness, joy is turned to wantonness . . . a pack of wolves snarling . . . a charnel house decked for a wedding.

"The bruit of a hellish Babel is in my ears, the reek of carrion is in my nostrils, the glare of Hell blasts my sight—take me away."

The Devil looked at the Libertine and smiled. "You are a true Libertine," he said.

The Poet said:

"I see two streets that cross. They remind me of a corner in my village where we used to gather. Here there is a crowd, too. The people look very small, but we are very high up in the air. At home there was a hotel and a store. Here there are hotels and many stores. I see street cars, automobiles, trucks. They make their way slowly because there are many of them.

"The lights are very many and very bright. They are made of electricity and look pretty. The people walk along like the people in my village. They hurry or saunter—they chat or are silent. They like to show off their fine clothes—people always like to do that. They look in the shop windows—people always look in shop windows. They look at each other, too. Everybody's eyes are shop windows for everybody else.

"This isn't very interesting. In fact it bores me. Let's go away again."

The Devil looked at the Poet and smiled. "You are a true Poet," he said.



THE STALKER

By Harry Kemp

I SHALL get this woman. I shall stalk her deliberately, as one stalks a shy, wild animal. For that is just what a woman is when it comes to love. It is a biological fact that I have hitherto refused to recognize.

Love at first sight is purely a fiction of the poets.

I shall get this one step by step, stratagem by stratagem—by subtle, indirect ways, always keeping on the other side of the wind.

Yes, I shall stalk my prey—till, the time for the final leap arrived, I shall close in and she shall be mine beyond all escape.

I have done forever with idealism in love. There is only this brutal fact: I want her. I want to make her utterly mine. It is a cruel hunger that urges me. Unless I can awaken that same hunger in her I must starve. . . .

But now, more than ever, will I wear my embroidered coat of romance. And I shall weave wonderful songs full of delectable imagery and lofty sentiments—all in order to catch her soul about the feet and bring her down crashing into the pitfall I have cunningly contrived and concealed for her.

In courtship, the most successful are always the most insincere. The other one, The Last One—I lost her because I loved her madly, to distraction, and, fool that I was, I let her see it too soon.

It was all very well with us so long as we were friends. Then I needed affect no indifference of heart. I was really indifferent. So, instinctively, she reached out for me . . . in a hundred ways . . . she became interested . . . affectionate. . . .

Then, suddenly, I know not why—as in some ways she rather repelled me—the trumpets of Love sounded, the walls crumbled, and she had me. It all came of a chance touch of the hands . . . a mere handclasp of womanly sympathy, of affection . . . affection which might have ripened into love, if I had let it grow without trying to force it.

But there was where I made a ninny of myself. Love came upon me of a sudden. I grew too rash, too impetuous. I seized both her hands. . . . I plumped down on my knees.

The look of the nearly captured wild thing that had been playing too close to danger came into her eyes. I trembled ridiculously. I saw in an instinctive flash that all was lost. Our positions were now immediately reversed. I felt a delicate, soft hand of mastery, femininely cruel, closing over me.

But could I not yet take her by storm? I tried. I spoke. My words had the effect of wine—upon me. But my madness, as it increased, made her only the more sane, and my weakness ebbed into her and counted for her strength. I found myself falling away . . . further . . . further . . . like a swimmer caught in a strong current, who sees the green bank slipping over backward, despite his agonized efforts to draw near it.

Well, I had lost. I was sick and ashamed. For there was no reason for my losing: I felt that, had I been a little less impetuous, had I restrained myself from making a definite declaration, I had surely won. In courtship language should only be used as an evasion; a

timid woman does not mind a sigh, she luxuriates in it—but to blurt out “I love you!” is the surest way to drive love away. God made silence just for lovers.

II

THIS other woman—the one I am determined to capture—she is already piqued. I am polite to her . . . affable . . . and yet I show a sort of indifferent interest. But I readily give her into another man’s hands. Though my brain seethes with thoughts of her, I force myself to be calm. I speak words of friendship, tell her how good it is to have her for a friend, to have her to go to once in a while as a relief from my work.

“Men have yet to learn,” I say, “the beauty of a merely human friendship with a woman—a friendship into which no love enters, a companionship founded solely upon sympathy.”

She is puzzled. She leans her little brown head sidewise and pretends to agree with me. Yet I know she hates the idea of a man’s not being at her feet. And I do not say this in reproach. She should hate it. She is unutterably beautiful, and it is right that she should expect this of men, as it is right that an artist should expect the discerning to admire his masterpiece.

“I have been thinking a lot about you,” she said to me the other night, after I had deliberately not seen her for several weeks, “I have been thinking a lot about you . . . analyzing our relationship . . . and, do you know, I rather like you.”

I remained silent. Then she came out a little further.

“Most men are so silly. They get too sentimental. They impose their attentions on one to a sickening degree. They can never forget that a woman is a woman. . . . Oh, you know what I mean,” she added, with a wave of her hand.

“Please don’t think,” she continued, “that I am boasting of conquests. I don’t want conquests. It is too awk-

ward to have a grown man flopping about, declaring sudden and undying love. . . . Some of them actually cry . . . a thing they would be ashamed to do before other men.

“Now, don’t call me heartless . . . but what can one do? One cannot force love . . . but I always feel so sorry . . . and maternal. . . . Men are such spoiled boys . . . such overgrown children.

“But you are different,” she continued; “so I always have a sense of freedom when with you . . . I feel that I can be alone with you as safely as with a brother . . . or . . . another woman.”

I did not feel at all complimented. But I began quoting poetry and talking art . . . and all the warmth of passion I felt for her I put furiously into abstract ideas.

Strangely enough, she glowed to it as if I were making love to her . . . which I was.

That night, as I left, she gave me a warm handclasp. I went down the front steps feeling as young and triumphant and immortal as a Greek god.

III

A *rappor*t has been established between us. I have so far done good work. She has grown very gentle and tender toward me. I accept this as a matter of course, transferring all my emotion into idealistic conversation. I discuss Maeterlinck . . . Bergson . . . Strindberg . . . Shaw . . . Feminism.

As I go she tells me my coat collar is up . . . she starts to arrange it. If she only knew how I thrill at the touch of her hand she would be frightened! She must not guess it. . . . I almost pray for calm. . . . She finally arranges the refractory collar.

“Good night!”

“Good night!”

I go home. . . .

If she only knew . . . if she only knew. . . .

IV

THE bird is nearly charmed—but one glimpse of the cage, one direct, unguarded motion, one careless glance of the eye and I know I have lost her forever.

I like the game. It is a game greater than every other game . . . greater than the game of business . . . greater than the game of war. It is the game of life itself, this wonderful, delicate game of love. . . .

I tremble . . . I am afraid of myself . . . I can no longer trust myself . . . I believe I will take a few weeks' vacation out in the country and write more on my play—my blood must learn to beat more evenly and under better control.

I've dropped her a note—that the call of work compels me to seclude myself for a few weeks. I tell her how appreciative I am of her friendship. I tell her what a sensible girl she is to understand my motives . . . how fine it is that a man of genius can find such a natural, such a rare and unconstrained companionship with a woman as she.

Things progress . . . she has written to me . . . a dainty little scented envelope. Her writing is like steel engraving. There is something silken about the flow of it, and yet it has in it the hardness and clearness of a diamond.

"I am sure you must be happy . . . out there . . . all alone with your dreams . . . in the flowering summer. . . . It must be wonderful to be a poet . . . to be self-sufficient. . . . It seems that that is what a woman can never learn to be."

The game progresses . . . "So self-sufficient" means "so unimpressed with my charms," does it not?

I must hold out. I must. I must keep the game up—keep on the other side of the wind. A delicate, unconscious wild creature. I can see the motions of her very soul within her, as a watchmaker looks into the heart of a tiny mechanism through a carefully adjusted glass. . . .

My first impulse is to write immediately . . . a letter packed full of poetry and passion. A poet in a book might do that with impunity, even with success. A poet in actual life dare not, for this is the age of restraint and self-control. I would like to let myself go . . . lose weight . . . even get ill . . . such is my nature . . . but this is an age where it is held to be equally shameful to admire a sunset or to express an emotion over beautiful women. . . .

Another letter:

"Frankly, I miss you. You poets are so remote from life. Why don't you live on earth instead of on a star? But I forget . . . astronomy teaches us that this earth is also a star.

"But are you sure that it is not harmful for you to stay out there quite alone? Your letter describing the beauty of the landscape, the quaintness of the people, the glory of the moonlit nights and sun-filled days was very poetic—but is this all that the heart of the artist needs?"

That is a palpable lead. . . .

I haven't answered this letter, and now it has been nearly a week. . . . I feel every fiber of my being wishing to cry out "I love you, I love you!" Yes, every nerve in me, every atom, is trying to turn Judas to my purpose.

I fight against myself fiercely, in a sort of pagan Puritanism—fight against myself not to rush in to town and throw myself at her feet, inert, shaken . . . and so lose her forever.

She writes me at great length of the people she is meeting (I hate them all). She tells me casually that she is much interested in an artist, a Russian . . . who knows much about art. . . .

The damned fellow! Is he also trying his hand at my game?

No . . . she thinks that will have an effect on me. . . . She thinks rightly . . . it does, but—if it does she sha'n't see it. . . .

I write, telling her how glad I am that she is enjoying herself and meeting new people . . . that I shall be glad to meet her artist when I get back to town. (How shameless I am!

What a liar love is making of me! I think I shall go mad out here. I hate, I detest the country. It is so utterly stupid and bovine. One only lives in the country for a purpose, one lives in town because one likes to. I am going back to town. . . .

V

HOME again . . . I can see the trees of Washington Square from my window . . . the busses stopping and people getting off and on . . . bootblacks pestering foot-passengers. . . .

I've got lots of good poetry out of this adventure, this game of mine, whether I win or not.

I'll telephone her . . . I've been back two days. . . .

She upbraided me for not coming to see her immediately. . . .

I met the artist. I praised him to her, feeling all the while like knifing him, a feeling he must fully have shared.

She tells me I am a great and noble man.

"That Russian," she says, "I thought he was different from other men . . . like you . . . but he wasn't . . .!"

"Why, what has gone wrong?"

I grew dizzy with wrath against him.

"He . . . made love to me!"

"Well?" I remark, assuming indifference. "If the man loves you, is there any crime in his telling you so?"

I know that my rival is disposed of. He had made a bad move.

"No . . . no . . . there is no blame, of course. Oh, I can't explain." She added after a silence: "You . . . you don't understand women."

"No . . . I understand women no more than women understand men, but, as an artist, I have an instinct for their moods and feelings."

"You don't know how grateful I am to you!"

"Grateful? For what? What have I given you, done for you?"

"You ask me that? You have given me sympathy, understanding . . . and . . . and . . . you have let me alone!"

"I am glad I have pleased you."

A look of disappointment drew its shadow across her face. I should have shown a little more enthusiasm. I quickly attempt to amend.

"I get much inspiration from you."

I find that this, too, is a blunder. I have acquitted myself badly.

"Oh, you poets! All you think of is yourselves. Your inspiration! Your art!"

"Underneath we are just the same as the rest of humanity. Only we are more analytical, and, at the same time, more naive!"

I recite her whole pages of Keats as we sit before her studio fire. . . .

I thrill . . . her hand seeks mine. . . . I hope she does not become conscious of me. I must remain quiet or she will find me out. I fold one finger over the back of her hand, stroking sympathetically. . . .

"When are you coming to see me again?" she asks as I leave. . . .

"Whenever you say."

"Oh . . . you . . . you!" She rages humorously.

I turn to her in affected, yet sympathetic, surprise.

"For Heaven's sake, what's the matter?"

"Nothing . . . only sometimes I wish you were more of a man and less of a poet. That's all. . . ."

That hurts me a little, yet I laugh with great joy in my heart. She is growing weaker, and I am drawing strength from her weakness. . . .

She leaves her hand in mine. It is hot, almost feverish. . . .

"I'll come Wednesday," I begin. "But," I continue, as if suddenly remembering, "probably I shall be called out of town that day, and, besides—"

"Besides what? you big stupid boy!"

"Besides . . . don't you usually see the artist on that day?"

"Well, what of that? And if I don't care to see him again, don't you think I have a right to break the engagement if I choose?"

"You mustn't do that, dear," I advise magnanimously. "It isn't right. Think how he will feel."

"I don't care how he feels. Do you think I want him blundering about and plumping down on his knees beside me again? I wouldn't have that happen for all the world . . . and though he promised . . . yet." . . .

"Very well, then . . . just as you say . . . I will come Wednesday afternoon for tea, if I am not called out of town."

Her face is lifted up expectantly. It droops back like a flower needing rain. My blood is leaping out of my very body. My darling! . . . No, no, no! I intend to capture you, body and soul. . . . I shall wait . . . I shall wait. . . .

What a sense of triumph I have as I walk down the street. A king going to his coronation could not walk more triumphantly.

My friends join in telling me how well I am looking. . . .

VI

WEDNESDAY morning. . . .

She has called me on the telephone.

"I hope I have not disturbed you!" she says.

She asks me not to get a sudden mood and forget.

I tell her that I am not going out of town, and so will come. I tell her I have been writing some good verse of late. She asks me to bring it with me.

How pleasant and cheery the fire is this afternoon in her studio. A gray rank mist hangs over the town. . . .

She is unusually animated. I read her my verse. . . .

"How beautiful!" she exclaims. "How beautiful!"

A pause. . . .

I am sitting on a foot-rest at her feet. . . .

"Life is a wonderful thing, isn't it, boy!"

I notice the caresses in her words. I lean my head back on the edge of her wide chair. . . .

"Yes, it transcends all art, all artistic expression."

Her hand is groping blindly. She restrains it. Again it gropes . . . I bold-

ly take it. And she lets it rest because it is held in such assured, comradely fashion.

Yet it seems as if our hearts were beating, crying out to each other through our fingers. . . .

"Do you know . . . I have grown very fond of you . . . for some reason or other . . . boy," she says quietly.

"And I think a great deal of you, too. You are the finest pal I've ever had."

With the other hand she is now stroking my hair. Then she takes that hand quickly away.

But, as I appear not to have noticed, and accept it quite naturally, it wanders back again, with a curious life of its own.

"Yes," I continue, "we *are* having a wonderful companionship—aren't we, little girl?"

"Shall I make a confession?" she asks timidly.

"Well?"

"I used to wish that you were more of a man and less of a poet. It piqued me somewhat . . . but now I must confess . . . if you had been . . . I would have lost . . . all this . . . now . . . now . . . I am glad!"

VII

TEARS had gathered in her eyes.

I felt like a beast. I was on the point of confession. A sudden rush of blood in me made me feel like telling her that I was a miserable cad . . . not sincere . . . a love-crook . . . a mere player of the sex game. . . .

A sense of humility swept over me such as comes to a saint who loves all humanity. I had a desire to give myself away, thoroughly, completely. . . .

But, as if a ghost out of the dark had warned me, my very hair crept with the fatality of following out such an impulse. . . .

Not knowing what to say, I acted. I placed my head against her knees and felt her trembling with emotion, as some rare instrument shakes with music. . . .

For a long, long time we sat there silent. There was no need to speak. The room seemed alive with a great force, a divine power, as if a miracle were about to push over from the infinite into the finite.

The fire fell in. It startled me like a crash of thunder. . . . Pleasant noises . . . a far water tap . . . feet on stairs . . . the streets and the traffic a dream-world away. . . .

I rose to my feet, overawed. . . .

I quietly tended the fire. One always does little things when one is moved. She also rose . . . I looked into her eyes. She lifted her face thirstily.

"Not yet, not yet!" cried my mating instinct within me, seeking for permanency. . . .

"Now . . . now! . . . I am starving!" cried my foolish heart.

"Stay a little longer," she urged, "we will eat together here."

My emotions had made me ravenously hungry . . . I told her I would stay. I helped her set the table. We went through trivial household acts together. We even jested a little. . . .

After supper we sat before the fire again. . . .

I didn't offer to read again. . . .

We sat in absolute silence. . . .

Quite naturally our hands met and clasped . . . both of them. She squeezed my hands tightly. I looked up into her face. Tears were streaming down her cheeks. I really felt alarmed.

"What's the matter, little woman?"

"I don't know . . . I just want to cry . . . I don't know why."

"Are you unhappy? Tell me what is wrong, dear!"

I rose to my knees and leaned up to her. She bent over me. Her hair set me on fire. It had dropped loose all around me.

"Tell me, dear," I urged, all my soul beating its wings in my voice.

"I don't know . . . I can't just tell

. . . we women are such strange creatures . . . I . . ."

She cried inarticulately. . . . She restrained herself and smiled weakly.

"I suppose you think I am a fool!" she remarked timidly.

I made no answer.

Her eyes were closed. She breathed heavily.

Slowly I brushed her hair with my lips. I paused . . . still she lay quiet . . . I felt superb. I was absolute master of myself. I touched my lips lightly to hers . . . she reached up hungrily . . . she had lost herself. . . . Then I kissed.

VIII

I CANNOT restrain myself any longer. I lose myself, too. I kiss and kiss and kiss. Her arm is about my neck . . . the other lies inertly across my lap.

The trap is sprung . . . she is mine, absolutely mine. I do not have to tell her I love her. She is mine, mine forever. . . .

The trap is sprung. Yes, and not for her alone . . . for both of us . . . for the earth gives way beneath me, too . . . the grass, sod, broken wood tumble in about me as I fall into the pit I have dug. . . .

There plays an unconscious smile, a wan, happy smile, across her lips. I am afraid of it. It speaks of something bigger than I am or ever think to be . . . something that reaches back to the nadir and source of creation. . . .

I've got her. . . .

And she's got me!

But I don't care . . . I am very glad. . . .

And now we can both say it. . . . I, quickly and fiercely: "I love you!"

She, with a deep, gentle power as vast as eternity—dream-like, the same wan, triumphant smile playing across her face . . . "And I love you!"



NONE SO BLIND

By Frank Norville

CARVER had always liked the Barings' house with its large low rooms, open fires, long windows with deep embrasures, and quiet lights on the dark panels. It was low-keyed, friendly, with no useless ornamentation, things were either useful or beautiful, and each room seemed to carry its own individual sense of well-ordered privacy. He had dreamed of just such a home, built and furnished leisurely with the patient intention of preparing it for a long life. To-day it seemed to satisfy him more completely than ever; it was exactly the setting he would have chosen for the confidence he intended to make.

His friendship with Nell and Adrian Baring dated from childhood, but it was not until after their marriage that he had become so closely drawn to them that they seemed an integral part of his own life. He scarcely ever thought of them individually, but usually as "the Barings." So it was not the length of their friendship so much as its quality of sympathetic understandingness that had winged his feet to their pleasant home where he wanted to tell his news and to talk about "the dearest girl in the world." For despite Carver's thirty-seven years, he was genuinely in love for the first time in his life—at least this was the first time he was ever sure that he was genuinely in love.

He was filled with a pleasant sense of excitement as he wandered about the room, glancing at the few good pictures, running an appreciative finger over the silky grey surface of a bit of old pewter, or poking the burning logs on the hearth to brighter flame. He knew that his engagement to Marion Lawton would cause a ripple of surprise and

comment in society. Appraising mothers had begun reluctantly to resign themselves to the fact that a perfectly good husband was being wasted on a collection of Chinese porcelains and a Jap valet. The Barings, however, had known the state of his feelings, and now that his hopes were realized, he was anxious to expand under the genial warmth of their friendly interest. Adrian was leaving for Brazil within a few days and that was one of Carver's reasons for coming so promptly; with a lover's egotism, he felt that his own good fortune would somehow soften the pain of separation between his friends.

However, after waiting twenty minutes, Carver began to have a funny "let down" feeling which changed to resentment when Nell finally came down with slightly reddened eyes and a downcast face. Of course, the poor girl would feel cut up about Adrian's going so far away, but it was his second trip, and . . . hang it all, she'd taken the edge of things off for him.

"How short the days are growing," Nell began, trying to speak in her ordinary voice. "Shall we have lights? Don't let's," she answered for him. "Poke up the fire a little, Carve, but don't look at me. I'm a fright to-day and awfully low, but I warn you I don't want to be cheered up a bit."

Carver had the rebellious feeling of an eager little boy who has been told to keep quiet while the grown-ups talk, but he made some sympathetic reply, and assured her that he understood, for it was only natural that she should feel low spirited, especially as this was the second trip the dear fellow had taken to South America within eighteen months;

however, he supposed really congenial people never got used to such separations, and she and Adrian were such wonderful companions that it must be like lopping off a hand or foot to have him go. Carver began to glow a little and he drew his chair closer to Nell's side of the fire as his voice took on a deeper tone of confidence. It was going to be a pleasant talk after all.

"You know, Nell, you and Adrian have been an example to us all. You were such babes in the woods when you were married that lots of people shook their heads over you. Well, it's almost fifteen years now and many a timid bachelor has been encouraged with 'just look at the Barings!' I owe you a lot myself, not only for your splendid friendship all these years, but" . . . he paused to choose his words.

Before he could continue, Nell leaned forward with a gesture swift, impressive, arresting; all the sparkle and brilliancy of the face he knew so well seemed blotted out, she suddenly looked old, haggard and unfamiliar. Her voice was harsh and her words came short; lava-jets from the seething volcano of some eruption of long-pent feeling.

"I don't know when it began," he heard her saying. "It wasn't a sudden dislike, just a gradual cooling off, a dying away, until all that remains is an echo whose whisper teases with its reminiscence. Sometimes I think if he were anyone but my husband I couldn't choose a more delightful companion.

. . . Don't look at me like that. . . . I know you hate me for telling you this, and I know I'll hate myself for telling, but I'm desperate to-day, and when you talk about us as 'an example' I could scream it from the house tops if I thought it would save some other woman from the dreadful ennui and . . . yes, agony I endure. Oh, he doesn't beat me or neglect me. I sometimes wish he would. A good brawl might clear the atmosphere . . . and he doesn't know how I feel. I grin and smile and accept his unfailing devotion, his caresses, and I feel like a thief or a murderer half the time. When he

went to Brazil last year I had reached the point where I thought I should die if I had to stay in the house with him another day. Do you suppose I didn't suffer when he said good-bye to me, straining me to him as though he could never let me go, tears in his eyes, his voice broken by emotion? Why, Carve, I'd have died gladly the next moment if I could have felt that way toward him. Women are natural liars and deceivers and he never dreamed that I didn't cry myself to sleep that night, and I did, but it was for the precious thing I had somehow lost. I kept thinking, 'Now we are separated it will all come back; perhaps I'm not well, or we've been together so constantly that we've grown stale.' I dwelt on all of his endearing qualities; I remembered only the kindest, sweetest things about him . . . and I prayed, although I'm not a praying woman, but I wanted it back so much that I felt I had to have help. Well, I thought my prayers had been answered. He was to be gone three months, but he came home at the end of six weeks. I went on to New York to meet him. I could hardly wait for the boat to dock. I was on tip-toe, but . . . he hadn't put his foot on the gang-plank before I felt that terrible blank emptiness of soul and the beginning of waiting again."

Outside the twilight deepened; the fire burned low, and the slow-dropping heap of white ashes made Carver think of a new-made grave. Nell's face was a blot in the growing dusk, but the weariness of her soul was echoed in her voice. . . .

"Well, I had almost reached the breaking point when this second South American deal came up. When Adrian told me that he would have to go, I felt like a prisoner who had been given a few months' parole. I hated myself and I shammed reluctance until in the end I had to urge him to go. Thank God, he can never know the urgency of my urging. . . . It's all my fault. He hasn't changed a bit. I suppose there is just something bad and wicked in me." Her voice seemed to

fail her and the silence between them was abysmal, then the long rise of a sob heaved her breast and suddenly she was sobbing, clamorously, shamelessly, in desperate abandon.

Carver sat for a moment, his senses paralyzed, but they bounded into activity as he heard the outer door slam and Adrian's step in the hall. He knew that he must prevent their meeting, for in Nell's present state of mind there was no telling what irremediable thing she might say. With an inarticulate murmur he groped his way from the room.

Adrian's hand was on the knob of the door opposite and when he discovered Carver he simplified matters by exclaiming: "You here? Good. Come on in for a smoke if you're not in a hurry."

They went into the library where Adrian busied himself for a few moments with the lights and the fire.

"I'm glad you came around," he began as he lighted a match for Carver's cigarette. "Poor Nell's in the dumps. I begged her to go to a tea-fight or matinee this afternoon, but I telephoned out at two o'clock and the maid said she was lying down. I didn't disturb her, but I knew the poor girl was probably crying her eyes out. She takes things too hard." He sighed deeply and Carver made some reply, he hardly knew what, he felt spent and tired, that *taedium vitae* so often experienced by the Romans swept through him overwhelmingly, and a short time ago life had seemed so good and young. . . .

Adrian stirred uneasily in his chair and sighed again. "I feel like a dog about leaving Nell again so soon, still it's over a year, but I ought not go . . . I ought not go."

"Nonsense, nonsense," Carver blustered. "She'll be all right. You need a change. It'll do you both good."

"I suppose you're right," Adrian's voice was low, and he laid aside his cigar as he clasped his hands behind his head, "or you would be if Nell were different, but she feels things more than

any one I ever knew. There are no half measures with her, it's all or nothing. She's an angel, an angel, I tell you! but . . . my God, Carve, I've got to get away." He rose and stood before Carver, his face strained and working. "It's all my fault and it would kill her if she ever knew. Oh, there's no one else, don't think me more of a cad than I am. I love her as much as I ever did, but there are times when I turn the corner and see her standing there in that window watching for me that I feel as though I could turn around and not come home all night, only that I'm morally certain she'd be still standing there in the morning.

"I don't know when it began, but one day I got to thinking that we had been married over twelve years and we hadn't been separated a week in the whole time. It wasn't any more her fault than mine; I was tied pretty closely to business, and the few little trips I was able to take were made in the summer when we would naturally go away together, but I began to have a haunted feeling. I wondered how she could stand so much of me, but if she felt anything she never showed it, and I felt such a brute that I tried to make it up to her by extra devotion. Finally it got so bad that I decided I must be out of condition every way and I trumped up that trip to South America, but her poor tear-stained face rose up before me so often that my conscience got to hurting me and I came home six weeks sooner than I intended. I have wondered since if it wouldn't have been better if I'd stayed my time out. Well, this time I really am obliged to go and I can't see any way of finishing up the business inside of eight or ten weeks, and . . . Lord, Carve, I need a kicking for raving this way. It'll be all right when I come back and I'll wish I hadn't told you, but more likely we'll tell Nell and all have a good laugh over it. In the meantime forget it if you can, but don't forget to be good to Nell."

Carver drew a deep breath as the

Barings' front door closed behind him. It was quite dark and a few faint stars shone in a pale sky. He felt as though he had been running for a long time in a close and fetid room, and he decided to walk home as he wanted air and free movement. Selfish. Morbid. Neurotic. Unwholesome were some of the epithets that came to his mind as he walked down the darkening streets. He was glad he hadn't told them anything about Marion. . . . At this moment he couldn't bear to think of her; it was almost as though they had hinted at some deformity or blemish that he would later discover for himself. His thoughts were bitter as he let himself into his flat.

The room was warm and the deep chairs and bright grate invited him. His noiseless Jap valet took his coat and hat and helped him into a lounging robe.

"Dinner in here," he said briefly.

He sank into a chair feeling suddenly middle-aged, old. The dinner was good but he didn't eat much, and when it was cleared away he switched off the lights and sat with brooding eyes staring into the fire. . . . Were all married people like that? After all, he was a fool to resign his orderly, peaceful life for the vagaries of a woman . . . he supposed they were all pretty much alike, but

Marion had seemed so different. Just a short time ago he had started out filled with a fresh and festive sensation, eager to share his happiness with his friends . . . friends! He felt that he hated the Barings, the thought of them filled him with disgust and resentment . . . but Marion . . . only last night he had sat there thinking of the long, good life they would have together, and his own longing anticipation had evoked a vision of her stealing in and sitting beside him in the firelight, she had always made him think of some shy night bird. He reached forward and began poking viciously at the fire and as it sprang to blaze a little glow lighted in his heart and ran through all his being in a sweet warm flame. "She is different," he exclaimed aloud, "and so am I." He lost himself in pleasant musings, and as he dreamed the frown smoothed itself from his brow as though touched by a tender palm; he smiled a little fatuously and sighed, "We both are," his tone was filled with tolerant contempt as he added, "and thank heavens there aren't many married people like those Barings."

Back in the shadows a little god danced a saraband and hugged himself in noiseless, impish mirth.



THE WHITE-BLOOMED BOUGHS

By Gertrude Cornwell Hopkins

Nothing of Spring, with all her dear, wild fairness?
Nothing but tear-blurred eyes
For May?

Nay, but the blithe-crowned Spring demands your gladness:
You cannot wear your sorrow through the day;
The little, catching boughs of white-bloomed bramble
Tear it away.



WHOSE LITTLE SLIPPER ARE YOU?

By Elinor Maxwell

No one has ever accused me of being terribly clever, or ravishingly beautiful, but cheer up. I'm not the heroine of this story. The girl it's all about is there with the looks, I assure you. Her name is Jerry Berry, which sounds like something you get to drink at a soda fountain—but don't let that influence you!

The first time I saw her was at one of Mrs. Angus McCreary's famous house parties. "The Priory" is situated half way between St. Louis and Hannibal, and in this case all of Mrs. McCreary's St. Louis guests were to be of the male persuasion—except me, and I am one Katrine Anstruther by name—while the girls were to be got from Hannibal and thereabouts.

Jarvis Mooney, Bob Mitchell, Barret Lamping, Billy Carstairs, Jim Neville and I arrived on the two o'clock C. B. & Q. train Wednesday afternoon. It was the day before Thanksgiving, and of course the Pullmans were crowded to overflowing. Everyone was on his way to visit his uncles or his cousins or his aunts, and so we six had to crowd into one section.

Young Angus met us at the station with two limousines and a racing roadster. A chauffeur and footman in lavender livery (try to believe me!) were on the front seats of the lims, while Angus himself drove the racer. Mrs. McCreary's servants always wear such gay-looking clothes that it's all I can do, when I'm at The Priory, to keep from believing that I'm in a comic opera. Positively, if some one came up and addressed me as Elsie Janis or Julia Sanderson, I'd think it was my mistake.

We had been so cramped for room in

the train that when we alighted at the little wooden depot and beheld the three cars waiting for us it really seemed like an embarrassment of riches.

"Tit, tat, toe, three in a row!" said Billy Carstairs. Then turning to Angus, "Where's the funeral, old top?"

"Funeral?" said Angus blankly. He generally does say things blankly. He's that kind!

"Yes, dearie!" Billy returned. "Three cars! Looks like a procession, eh, what, Katrine?" (Billy had just been to see Faversham and that is where he got his "eh, whats." Faversham says "eh, what?" about twelve times during every play, and Billy, in copying him, thought he was being fearfully actory, or Englishly—or Eastern—or something.) "I've been sitting on somebody's lap," he went on, "all the way from St. Louis, and I'm so used, by now, to economizing on room that for six of us to be met by three machines seems to me like a vulgar and ostentatious display of wealth."

"Oh, shut up, Bill!" cut in Barret. "Maybe you'd like Angus to send to 'The Priory' for a wheelbarrow and have some one cart you up in that!"

"Wheelbarrow," repeated Angus dazedly. "I don't believe we have one, you know!"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Jim Neville, holding his hand to his head, but I silenced him with a look, for, even if Angus were—well, somewhat literal, it was scarcely up to Jim to throw a fit about it, at least while he was a guest of the McCrearys. Afterwards, of course—

We had been standing on the platform all this time, and, at last, I start-

ed to get into one of the machines. Higgins, a footman, who had grown gray in the service, put the electric warmer under my feet. This wouldn't be a real, honest-to-goodness story if I didn't say something about one of the servants having grown gray in the service. However, it's quite true in this particular case. Higgins had been a coachman for the McCrearys in the good old days when horses were in vogue—before Angus was born, and Angus is twenty-five.

"Mrs. McCreary sent word," he said, addressing me, "that if the young people didn't mind we was to wait a few minutes for the 2:19 train from the north. Some of the other guests is to arrive on that train."

"Oh, quite true!" Angus exclaimed happily. "I had completely forgotten why we were waiting! All the girls are coming on that southbound C. B. & Q."

"Oh, now, sweetie!" Billy Carstairs protested. "You don't mean to tell us that you forgot the powder-puffs were to arrive on this train!"

Just at that moment a whistle was heard in the distance, the station agent and the Adams Express man appeared on the platform simultaneously, and, in an instant, the down train thundered into the station. Five girls and three maids alighted, and Angus and the footmen made a regular football rush in their direction, the men relieving the maids of the bags they were carrying, and Angus greeting the girls.

On getting a good look at them we St. Louisans decided that all of the damsels except one were known to us, we having met them at various house parties. The one that we onlookers didn't recognize was, friend reader, the heroine of this tale—Jerry Berry. She had just returned from five years abroad; she was nineteen years old, and so blamed good-looking that, on perceiving her, all the men immediately began to straighten their cravats, and rearrange the set of their soft hats.

"Gosh!" said Barret.

"Gosh!" repeated Billy Carstairs,

turning a disgusted face to him. "My good man," he murmured. "You put it mildly. Yet, I fear me, I myself could do no better. It would take the pen of a Tennyson, and the brush of a Gainsborough to describe that fashion plate from *Vogue*, that—"

But before he had finished Angus came up with the rest of the guests, and the men were all presented to Jerry Berry. You really couldn't blame them for being rather foolish about her; she was such a radiantly beautiful thing—so slim, so trim, so trigly gowned. Her eyes reminded you of deep blue sapphires, her skin was like red roses under cream, her hair was gold-tinged brown, and very curly. Why, the way it was brushed up and rolled from the back of her white neck was alone enough to make some men leave home! She wore a severely tailored dark blue suit, and a rakish little black toque with a white wing flaring away from one side.

The men almost came to blows over who was to ride to "The Priory" in the same limousine with her, but it was finally arranged that she and Tevis Langdon, Anita Hughes, Adelaide Barstow, Barret and Billy were to take the same car in which I had been sitting for the last half hour.

Jerry talked a blue streak, and, considering the attractive manner in which she spoke, I could scarcely blame her. If my mouth looked the way hers does when she forms the letter "o," I'd be carrying on a continuous monologue! She had, during her years abroad, no doubt, acquired a delightfully English accent, while every now and then, just by way of variety, I suppose, she slipped in a French word or two. Barret's eyes never left her face all during the five-mile ride to "The Priory."

I knew he was completely bowled over, even before he took me aside, about an hour after we reached the McCrearys', and earnestly confided in me. We have known each other for ages, and it was only natural that he should tell me all about it.

"Katrine," he said, looking at me with

his serious blue eyes, "I'm crazy about that girl! Do you think there's a chance of her ever even looking at me? Do you think there's the slightest—"

"'Faint heart ne'er won—'" I began, but he wouldn't let me finish.

"Oh, now, for the love of Mike, Katrine," he said disgustedly, "don't be a bromide."

"All right then," I replied sadly; "I just thought you wanted a little sisterly advice! However, Barret dear, I wish you all the luck in the world!" And I really did, for Barret is a fine chap. Of course, his looks are nothing to write home about, but you don't want *every* man to be an Adonis! He might never have been, at twenty-eight, the successful lawyer that he is had he possessed perfect features and a beautiful pompadour. Even so, he's a big fellow, with a good frame, crisp, light-brown hair, and eyes too cerulean to be bold.

After the luggage was taken to our rooms and everyone had freshened up a bit, we all went to the cardroom—a big apartment with a stone fireplace at one end—for some bridge. It was during the course of the afternoon that I noticed that every other girl at "The Priory," except Jerry, wore on her little finger a platinum ring, with wee diamonds set all the way around. These rings fitted the finger just half way between the middle knuckle and the nail, and then and there I decided that of all the nutty customs of which I had ever heard, this was the worst. Later I discovered that, as in the case of Postum, there was a reason!

After dinner that night we played some more bridge. The stakes were fearfully high, and I was really glad when, about eleven o'clock, someone suggested that we put a record on the Grafonola and fox-trot a while, so we climbed up to the ballroom on the third floor. Barret just wouldn't let anyone else dance with Jerry, who looked deliciously pretty in a fluffy frock of pink tulle. Every time Angus or Billy or Jim started off on a trot with her, up

Barret bobbed and cut in—and Jerry didn't seem to mind.

About one o'clock I began to feel so droopy that I decided to slip off and go to bed, and, thinking no one would miss me, I stepped into the little electric elevator. Having never before used it to get from the ballroom to the second floor, I was a trifle confused when I walked into the dimly lighted, soft-rugged hall, and in consequence I wandered down the *left* corridor instead of the *right*.

Just as I was about to discover my mistake, Harkness, one of the menservants, dashed, wild-eyed, from a bedroom at my right.

"There's a burglar in Mr. Lamping's room!" he exclaimed. "I was a-dozin' in a chair waitin' for 'im to come up, when suddenly I hears a sound and rousin' myself, I jumps up just as the door was slammed to!"

"Oh, you've just had a bad dream, Harkness," I replied laughingly. He was a funny sight, with his gray hair tousled and his pale blue eyes bulging out so far you could have knocked them off with a stick. "All that's the matter with you is that you've been sampling some of that Burgundy we had for dinner tonight."

"Honest to Gawd, Miss Anstruther," he replied in a hurt voice, "I didn't even know you-all had Burgundy for dinner. I swear before Heaven that someone—"

Then, to my horror, every light in the hall went out, a door at my very elbow opened and shut and a figure touched me as it dashed past!

"I told you so!" Harkness shouted, and, yelling at the top of his voice, he started at a wild pace toward the main hall. It was evident that the fleeing figure must take that route. To go in the opposite direction was to lead to a window with a forty-foot drop to the garden below.

For a moment the dark halls were filled with Harkness's shrieks and mine (for I'm all there when it comes to making a sound), and with the noise of hurrying feet and finally a crash.

Then came the rhythmic bumps of a body descending the steps to the first floor—and a thud when it reached the bottom. Thrilling events, believe me!

Stumbling about, I tried to find the electric switch, but it was nowhere, and by now thoroughly frightened, I began to scream for the men upstairs. "Billy!" I yelled. "Angus!" (though Heaven alone knows what good he'd be!) "Jim! Barret! Come quick! Burglars!"

They had heard the commotion even before I began to call and were now rushing down the steps from the floor above.

"Where's the switch, Angus?" demanded Barret.

"Switch?" repeated Angus, as if he had never heard the word before. "Oh, really I can't say, you know! I don't believe I've ever turned the beastly lights on myself."

"Well, it's time you were learning," Barret returned harshly.

At last Mrs. McCreary found the button, and the hall suddenly flooded with light. All this time terrible groans had been wafted to us from the floor below, and Barret and Billy at once rushed down the steps. Harkness lay in a heap on the polished floor. His right arm was broken, but he was conscious.

"I told you they was a burglar, Miss Anstruther!" he said reproachfully, looking at me with sad eyes.

Well, the servants were all aroused by now and the house searched. I soon appreciated how crushed Harkness must have felt at my ridiculing his burglar ideas, for as the search progressed and nothing was found out of order everyone began to hint at a vivid imagination on my part. Then Barret entered his room and looked about.

"Well," he said slowly, "I've got to admit that it looks as if someone had been in this room. Look here! These dresser drawers appear to have been struck by a cyclone, and the toilet articles that graced my chiffonier are strewn about the room!"

"But nothing's missing, is there, Bar-

ret?" Mrs. McCreary inquired anxiously, as she sank into a wicker chair. Poor fat thing! She was all worn out by the door-to-door canvas we were making of her house.

"Well," replied Barret, his blue eyes smiling, "I haven't made an invoice of my stock yet, but from the looks of things I believe the intruder, whoever he was, had no desire to take anything, but merely wished to give Harkness a little extra job in straightening up! Nothing seems to have disappeared."

"Well," said Mrs. McCreary rather haughtily, fanning herself with a copy of *Life*, which she had picked up from a table, "I must say I can't suspect any of my servants. They are all as honest as—as my guests!"

"That being the case," murmured Billy Carstairs, "I think the doors had better be locked and everyone searched!"

"Yes," agreed Jim Neville, under his breath, "there have been certain little bridge games at 'The Priory' which were not so—so—"

"But why should the burglar have been partial to Mr. Lamping?" put in Jerry Berry, who, pretty child, was pale with fright. "Why did he come just to this room, and no one's else?"

"Perchance," ventured Billy, who was trying on one of Barret's ties which he had found on the floor, "perchance our little playmate here has the Kohinoor diamond packed in his suit-case along with his medicated flannels, and Arsène Lupin, knowing this, made at once for his boudoir. Eh, what, Lampy?"

"Arsène Lupin," Angus repeated feebly. "Why, I thought that was a book, or a play, or something of the sort."

"Yes, Angus," said Jerry kindly. "It is."

"Then, why?" Angus appealed, "why did Billy say that Arsène Lupin—" "

"Oh!" Billy groaned. "Nobody at home! Nobody at home!"

Well, another hour was spent in conjecturing about all these unusual happenings, and finally, when it was conclusively proved that no one could give

a sensible solution to the puzzle, we all decided to go to bed.

Jerry was still so upset that she insisted upon having her maid, Phipps, sleep on the *chaise-longue* in her room. Her deep blue eyes were wide with excitement, her clear skin as white as ivory. You would have thought, from the way she looked and acted, that the burglar had nearly knocked her down in the hall instead of me!

I didn't get up until eleven the next morning. Barret and Jerry, fresh from a canter, arrived in the breakfast room just as I did, Jerry looking alarmingly attractive and boyish in her black riding breeches and loose coat. A high white stock was wound about her slim neck, and a black, three-cornered hat with a red cockade in it was placed saucily on her bronze hair. She evidently knew how fetching she looked in this outfit, for she wore it not only to luncheon, but also on the long tramp we all took in the afternoon.

Hardly any mention was made of the burglar of the night before. In fact, there was absolutely no evidence of anything having even happened until teatime, when Harkness, his right arm in a sling, and a glum look on his face, pushed a tea-wagon about the card-room with his left hand.

As it was Thanksgiving night, we had a huge dinner, which lasted till about ten o'clock, after which the majority settled down to the business of the evening bridge. Jerry pleaded a headache as excuse for not playing, and she and Billy Carstairs departed for the drawing-room, from which place delightful strains of Drdla's "Serenade" and Dvorák's "Humoresque" soon wafted to us. Their refusing to play ruined, of course, one entire table, so Barret and I dropped out, and found a comfortable lounge on one of the landings, where we settled ourselves for a discussion of—Jerry.

After an hour or so Barret left me for a few minutes to get from his room a special brand of cigarettes which someone had just sent him from Cuba.

He returned much sooner than I expected, the cigarettes not visible to the naked eye, but with one of his trousers' pockets bulging suspiciously.

"I thought you said you were going after *cigarettes*," I began sarcastically, "but from the bulge of your pocket, I think it must have been a bag of Bull Durham!"

"Wrong guess, Katrine!" he replied, sitting down beside me. "That bulge is something far more interesting than a bag of tobacco. Listen! Just as I opened the hall door leading into my room, a figure dashed into the room adjoining, leaving in its wake this charming memento!"

With tantalizing slowness, he drew from his pocket the article in question, and, balancing it nicely on the palm of his large hand, held it before my fascinated eyes. It was the smallest, and the daintiest and the prettiest pink satin slipper I had ever seen! The heel was audaciously high, the toe unbelievably pointed and narrow.

"Well, I'll be darned!" I gasped.

"Well," Barret said politely, "so will I, for that matter!"

"Was—anything—stolen?" I inquired *sotto voce*.

"Just a measly little cigarette case," replied Barret sadly. He really seemed awfully disappointed. "One that Anita gave me two years ago for Christmas."

"Maybe she wanted it back," I suggested cattily.

"Well, maybe she did!" he agreed sweetly, "but, Katrine, my child, could Anita's number six foot crowd into this Cinderella?" And he again held the ridiculous little thing before my eyes.

"No," I said decidedly, "it could not!"

"Well, then!" Barret said, addressing the weak, pink affair in his hand, "the question is—'whose little slipper are you?'"

But here our Sherlock Holmes meeting was interrupted. Angus, having suddenly discovered that Adelaide knew a new step in the fox-trot which he wanted to learn, had broken up the bridge game, and every one was making

WHOSE LITTLE SLIPPER ARE YOU?

for the ballroom on the third floor. The miniature elevator holds only four, so most of the bunch were taking the steps. When Barret heard them coming towards us, chattering about three nulls, and the spade convention, and changing one's partner's bid, he quickly slipped the—ah—sample slipper into his pocket, and, together, we followed the crowd to the third floor.

When we got there Jerry was sitting on a fragile-looking gilt divan in one corner of the ballroom, and Barret hurried right up to her to ask for the canter some one had just started on the music machine.

She raised lovely blue eyes to him as he bent gracefully over her. "Why, really, Mr. Lamping," she said in the soft little drawl of hers, "I don't believe I care to dance."

"Not a chance, my friend!" said Jim Neville patronizingly. "I just asked her myself, and she turned *me* down."

Well, eventually all the men came up to get a dance with the prettiest girl at "The Priory," and each received the same sweet refusal. No, she wasn't tired—of course she *loved* to dance! She just didn't want to, tonight. Yes, the music was fast enough—or slow enough. Well, maybe—later on, she'd consent to canter with some one—

After a while the men turned in despair to the other girls, and Barret was left alone with Jerry.

It was during a particularly lively fox-trot, as Billy Carstairs and I were cooling off near an open window, that we saw Barret rise enthusiastically to his feet.

"Oh, I can't resist that music!" he said impulsively. "Come! Dance just this one!" he pleaded with Jerry.

She looked up at him with an adorable crinkling of her eyes.

"Oh, you *are* persevering!" she giggled. "Now, if this were a lame duck, Mr. Lamping, I'd not hesitate for a minute to dance with you, but really, when one has on but one slipper, it's difficult to trot according to Hoyle—or, rather, Castle!"

Then, before my devouring eyes, she

slipped out from the fluffiness of her skirts a very slim, very lovely little foot, clad only in a stocking of pink silk!

Barret, dumbfounded, gazed for an instant into Jerry's saucy upturned face, the color dying away from his lean, smoothshaven cheeks, his lips compressed into a firm, straight line. His fine blue eyes held a look of keen disappointment, of infinite pity, of deep disgust. Then, very slowly, he drew from his pocket the missing slipper, and without a word, and with charming gallantry, knelt and slipped it on the narrow, outstretched foot.

"Oh, *where* did you find it?" Jerry asked, with what was the best imitation of surprise I ever heard in anyone's voice.

"I found it," said Barret frigidly, "in my room."

"In *your* room!" Jerry exclaimed, feigning astonishment. "Oh, that Airedale puppy of Angus' must have carried it there!" She looked with wide, innocent eyes into Barret's stern face, Then—I am willing to swear to it—one long-lashed, white eyelid dropped for the fraction of a second in a wink! After which she rose to her feet, and, placing a ringless hand on Barret's sleeve, said, "Well, I'm ready to dance!"

But Barret remained motionless, his compelling blue eyes searching her face for some expression of guilt, for some sign of repentance. She was the girl who had stolen his cigarette case, the burglar who had caused so much commotion the night before, yet there she stood, smiling gayly into his pale face, when he had just proved to her, to himself and to me that she was guilty of what is considered, even in the best circles, a crime!

As he continued to look at her, making no attempt to accede to her wish to dance, the color suffused her soft skin, and her red lips drooped petulantly. "I said I was ready to *dance* now!" she exclaimed angrily, stamping her foot—the very one, by the way, which Barret had just furnished with wearing apparel.

"Oh, very well," he said, in a color-

less voice, and, putting his arm about her waist, he started her off on a trot.

I was so completely dumbfounded by this revelation of the lovely Jerry's shortcomings that I stared after her with open eyes and mouth. In fact, I continued to gaze at the little thief and her big partner, as they dashed about the room in a succession of maxixe steps, eight-short-steps-and-a-jump, six glides, and so forth, until Billy, who had been standing patiently by my side all this time, and taking in the little drama before us but not knowing its meaning, interrupted my reverie-on-all-not-being-gold-that-glittered.

"Say, Katrine," he began in a peevish voice, "I've asked you five times if you weren't at last sufficiently cooled off, and on each occasion, I've been met by a perfectly blank stare. Talk about 'nobody at home,' Katrine, my child, at least try to *look* intelligent!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Billy!" I said apologetically. "I *have* been wool-gathering! Sufficiently cooled off? My word, yes! I'm frozen to the bone!"

So, off we danced, and every now and then I caught sight of Barret's tense white face as he whirled around with the pretty but erring Jerry. Poor chap! He had found his doll was full of sawdust after all! The girl in his arms was a thief—and *he loved her!*

The next day, while Jerry was playing "Tipperary" on the piano, and we were all gathered about her, pouring forth our souls in harmony, I noticed that, for the first time since her arrival at "The Priory," she wore, as all the other girls there did, a platinum band set with diamonds. It was, as in the case of Tevis, and Adelaide, and Anita, half way between the nail and the first knuckle of her little finger. I wondered if she had *stolen* it!

During the days that followed, as Fate—or Mrs. McCreary—would have it, Barret and Jerry were thrown together constantly. They never failed to be placed next to each other at luncheon or dinner, and, if there happened to be an extra seat in the machine in which Jerry was riding to town, Mrs. Mc-

Creary would invariably say, "Barret, you may sit here, dear!" Or, if, in getting up a table of bridge in which Barret was taking part and a fourth hand was needed, Jerry would, nine times out of ten, be called upon. Oh, there were a hundred ways they were thrust into each other's presence. If you have ever been to a houseparty, you'll know yourself the chances there are for pairing off a man and a girl, whether or not the paired ones are willing; and I knew for certain that Barret was trying his best to avoid Jerry. He had fallen in love with her the minute he laid eyes on her, and now that she had proved herself to be not only a thief but an unrepentant, proud-of-the-job one at that, he was, by attempting to keep away from her, trying to make himself believe that it had all been an hallucination on his part.

I'm a regular old clairvoyant, however, when it comes to spotting *affaires du cœur*, and I knew that Barret was utterly miserable, and that it would be a snowy day in August before he'd get over being balmy about Jerry. The worst of it all was that she was so fearfully attractive. Even we girls, whose tongues were simply hanging out with envy, had to admit that! As for the men—they were all completely gone over her—her sapphire blue eyes, her long, curly lashes, her quick wit, her appealing ways, her soft, Englishy drawl. In fact, they were all so busy doing little acts of kindness for her that Anita and Tevis and Adelaide and I were merely secondary considerations—sort of like one's grandmother, you know, or one's cousin's fat wife.

It was the last night before the breaking up of Mrs. McCreary's party, and when we were all rather bored with each other, having danced and skated and bridged together for a week, that Billy Carstairs suggested that, by way of breaking the monotony, we play children's games for a while. Indoor "I spy" with the lights all out, for instance, was one that he proposed. It is strange to what means some supposedly

sane, grown-up people will resort for amusement! This nonsense, however, proved more of a success than you'd think possible, and for an hour and a half we cavorted about "The Priory," hiding in linen-closets and the dumb-waiters, pressing the surprised maids into service by making them show us choice hiding places and running the silly little elevator frantically up and down again and again from the basement to the third floor.

This childish gayety was at its height when through the pitch black came a piercing scream, followed by several moans, and then—utter silence.

"What's that?" Adelaide shrieked.

"Some one's been hurt!" Barret said quietly, and he ran his hand along the wall to find the electric button. Really we seemed to be playing a continuous game of "Button, button, who's got the button?" at that houseparty! Strangely enough, Adelaide, Mrs. McCreary, Barret and I were in the same hall where, several nights before, there had been so much difficulty in finding the switch. This time Barret was able to put his hand on it at once.

"I *might* have known," Mrs. McCreary gurgled hysterically, "that something awful was bound to happen when I consented to you young hoodlums tearing up the house!"

By this time lights were being turned on all over "The Priory," and servants and guests rushed about frantically. Adelaide, Mrs. McCreary, Barret and I fell all over each other to see who could get downstairs first. Angus, looking blander than ever, met us in the second-floor hall.

"I say, mater," he drawled, looking at his mother with stary blue eyes, "some one's been hurt, somewhere, but we can't find 'em, don't you know!"

"You don't say!" ejaculated Mrs. McCreary, who at times finds her son rather tiresome.

Then a shout came from Billy Cartstairs on the first floor.

"Great heavens!" he yelled, "the elevator door is open, and the elevator's on the second floor! Some one's fallen

down the shaft! Good Lord, it's a woman!"

Pell-mell we stumbled over each other to the wide hall on the first floor, where Billy was found lying on his stomach, and gazing down the elevator shaft. Suddenly he rose to his feet, and pushing us all roughly aside made for a door which led from the first floor hall down a flight of steps to the basement.

"It's Jerry!" he shouted wildly. "It's Jerry!"

But Barret, somehow or other, got to her first, and we, looking through the open door of the shaft, could see him as he reached the huddled heap at the bottom. With trembling hands he lifted the sad little figure in his arms. He seemed to have forgotten entirely that this child was a thief; only love and sorrow remained in his heart and showed in his eyes.

He caught the poor hurt body in his arms, and kissed the lovely, unresponsive lips.

"Jerry mine!" he cried. "Oh, Jerry mine, open your eyes! Look at me, darling! I love you!"

And then very, very slowly the white lids fluttered, and for an eighth of an instant Jerry's blue eyes smiled into Barret's.

"No matter what I've done?" she asked in a weak whisper, and I of the onlookers was the only one, I believed, to know what she meant.

"Oh, darling!" Barret exclaimed softly, kissing her again, "we can live that down! What difference can it make now?"

Then Mrs. McCreary and Adelaide and some of the servants arrived on the scene with whisky and camphor and numerous other aids to the injured, and before another ten minutes had elapsed Jerry was lying between the fragrant, lace-edged sheets of her own bed. It was a half hour before Doctor Benton, the same physician who had been sent from Clarksville several nights before to patch up Harkness, arrived at "The Priory." That little houseparty was extremely profitable for the Doc! Well, after a thorough

examination, he pronounced Jerry's injuries nothing worse than a sprained wrist, and a dislocated knee—which in themselves were nothing to be desired, but, in comparison with the immediate death we had all conjured up for her, were welcome guests.

About ten o'clock the next morning, when Barret and I were taking nourishment in the breakfast room, Phipps, Jerry's maid, suddenly appeared.

"Miss Anstruther," she said, "Miss Jerry wishes to see you and Mr. Lamping in her sitting-room as soon as it will be convenient for you to come."

Barret jumped up joyously from his chair, dropping his serviette as he did so. I thought he was going to kiss Phipps!

"We'll go right away!" he informed her, happily.

"Oh, sit down, Barret!" I said. "I've just started on my grapefruit, and I intend to consume a bowl of Quaker Oats and an egg and some bacon and a few wheat cakes and a roll or so—"

He resumed his seat disgustedly. "*Everything* from soup to nuts!" he groaned. Then, turning to the maid, he said dismally, "Tell Miss Jerry, Phipps, that we'll be with her as soon as Miss Anstruther's appetite is satisfied."

"Barret!" I gasped. "You're the most insulting thing I've ever met! From the way you talk, one would think I was an anaconda!" And so, just to punish him, I ate heartily and at great length of everything the butler brought.

Mrs. McCreary was sitting with Jerry when we got to her little pink and white boudoir. Looking deliciously fresh and rosy in her *négligée* of pink crepe de chine and lace, the invalid was propped up in a large white wicker chair. She held a slim hand out to Barret, and with fine grace he lifted it to his lips. Believe me, Donald Brian had nothing on him when it came to the sentimental scenes!

"I thought you two were never coming," Jerry began in an excited voice. "There's something I'm just dying for you both to see—Katrine, because you

are the only girl who hasn't been 'in' on all the silly happenings of this past week, and you, Barret, because I think it will, no matter what you say, make you feel a trifle more comfortable over a certain little something. I have just been telling Mrs. McCreary all about it, and now you, my friends, may read for yourselves."

She then drew from the depths of the many cushions which were piled about her a long, official-looking document. Barret took it from her, and I, consumed with curiosity, read it over his shoulder. It ran as follows:

"We, the charter members of the Dare Club, hereby proclaim Jerry Warburton Berry a member of our worthy organization, in so much that she has carried out with success the conditions of the initiation—i. e., stealing from his room a sixteen karat, monogrammed cigarette case belonging to one Barret Lamping."

(Signed) ANITA HUGHES, President."

Barret and I looked at each other for a moment in silence, and then simultaneously burst into uproarious laughter. I think we were so pleased to find that Jerry's thieving had been merely the result of a silly dare that for the moment we were both rendered rather non *compos mentis*.

"So it was all in *fun*!" I gasped at last.

"Of course it was!" breathed the culprit. "It was all a joke—but when Barret found my slipper in his room, and really believed I was a *thief*, I just carried the thing through, because I—I wanted to prove that no matter *what* I was he just simply *had* to love me!"

"Darling!" Barret murmured ecstatically. But in my opinion it was not yet time for the final curtain, so with business-like perseverance I probed the matter further. "How did you happen," I asked, "to be in the ballroom last night, sitting on the divan, when we all got up there to dance?"

"Well, it was just this way," Jerry replied. "I had just stolen the cigarette case when Barret opened his door, so, in a frantic hurry, I dashed

through the one at the other side of the room. This let me into some one's room, and from there I ran into the hall. The steps leading to the third floor stood staring me in the face, and—it was really a Hobson's choice—I took them two at a time, fearing all the while that Barret was pursuing me. A few minutes later, as luck would have it, you all came up there to dance, and Barret found me slipperless."

"How long," inquired Mrs. McCreary dryly, "has this—er—dare organization been in existence?"

"Oh, ever since Tevis and the other girls were sixteen or so," Jerry bubbled. "That narrow band of platinum and diamonds that they all wear on their little fingers is the club badge. You see," and she held her left hand up for our inspection, "I have one now!"

"I see," Mrs. McCreary said frigidly, "and I must say that of all the idiotic things that I've ever heard of grown-up young women indulging in this is the

silliest! What's the object of it all, anyhow? Do you just want to stir up a little excitement?"

"I suppose that's it!" Jerry admitted meekly. Then, with enthusiasm, "Why once, Mrs. McCreary, when Adelaide was being initiated, she had to stop her electric in front of the Lathrop Club, and ask the first man who came out to get in with her—"

But here I had just had a thought! "Jerry!" I demanded, "weren't you ever going to let Barret know that it was all a joke? Perhaps he would never have told you he—he—cared for you unless you had fallen down the elevator shaft!"

"Well, maybe he wouldn't!" Jerry replied dubiously. "But you see, Katrine, I *did* fall down the shaft!"

"Yes, darling!" Barret exclaimed joyously, and bending, he kissed her squarely on the mouth, right before Mrs. McCreary and me. "You *did* fall down the shaft!"



THE POST-MORTEM

COLD mutton-stew; a soiled collar; breakfast in dress clothes; a wet house-dog, over-affectionate; the other fellow's tooth-brush; an echo of "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay"; the damp, musty smell of an empty house; stale beer; a mangy fur coat; katzenjammer; false teeth; boiled cabbage; a cocktail *after* dinner; an old cigar stump . . . the kiss of Evelyn after the inauguration of Eleanor.



DESPITE the cynics, most women know how to hold their tongues. But very few of them know when.



IN the axiom that truth is stranger than fiction, "stranger" is probably a misprint for "rarer."



THE FAREWELLS OF SEVEN WOMEN

BEING CERTAIN LETTERS RECEIVED BY A MAN BETWEEN THE AGES OF EIGHTEEN AND THIRTY-FIVE, AND WHAT HE BELIEVED THEIR WRITERS REALLY THOUGHT

By —————

FAREWELL THE FIRST

(What Mary Wrote)

SO our dream is over, Laddie. I feel very old to-night—suddenly old, as if I were not the same woman I was yesterday. Our friend has just left me, and has tried to be, oh so kind. I have heard over again the things I have said to myself hundreds of times, yet never have dared to say to you. And it all amounts to this—"He is eighteen, you are thirty, so now you are the same age; but when he is thirty, you will be forty-two; and when he is only thirty-five you will be forty-seven." That is the thing I tried to keep saying to myself that evening as we sat in the moonlight and watched the placid river, but the murmur of the night voices and the perfume of lilacs numbed my reason and urged the world-old falsehood, that love makes all things young. This is good-bye. We shall meet often, of course, and I hope shall have many talks about the various matters in which we both take so much interest. I will not pretend that I am happy in writing this, but I can say that my faith is great enough to accept it as a part of God's will with my life. And so—good-bye.

(What She Thought)

It was really getting rather embarrassing, and I could always hear people saying behind my back, "There's another widow taking a boy to raise."

* * *

FAREWELL THE SECOND

(What Helen Wrote)

Dearest Boy in the World: There's

no use being unhappy about it. It was inevitable that we should be discovered some time or other, and it is much better that it should have been by your father than by my husband. For, of course, I have got to go on living with him—there's no other way out. I'm not one of those strong-minded women—you know that. I'm just a woman who has to be loved. I was always like that, I think, and because I seemed like such a flirt, the family made me marry very young. You know the rest. Until you came I had been able to smother my natural inclinations, my desire to enjoy my own youth with someone who did not take me as a right, but as a gift. Of course we used to talk wildly about running off together, but, even if I had the courage to make the start, it could never last, for I know very well what a burden I would be to you. So here we are, at the end of it, and after a while you will fall in love with some fine girl who can be everything to you that I can not, as well as everything I have been. I hope—I know you will be happy. As for me—oh, well, what does it matter? I'll get along somehow. Good-bye—I love you, and never can forget you.

(What She Thought)

Thursday evening? Hm. Lodge night. Shall I call up Peter or Howard?

* * *

FAREWELL THE THIRD

(What Alicia Wrote)

I am sending back your ring by registered mail and a bundle of other presents by express. You have broken my

heart by your *deceit*. All the while you kept saying that you *surely* would be in a position to marry me next summer, you knew that you could not *possibly* do so, honorably. And when your last letter came, and you said that I would have to come away out *there* for the wedding, as it would not be possible for you to get away, and besides it would save so much money in traveling expenses, I began to make a few inquiries, and now I know why you don't want to come back here for the wedding. *You don't dare!* I've found out all about your debts and everything. And I had been telling all my *friends* about our plans, and getting my trousseau all picked out, and everything. It was going to be such a *pretty* wedding, with *bridesmaids* and *flower girls* and *ushers* and *all*. But all the while you had been planning to have me come out there by myself, and just get married by a justice of the peace or something, and it wouldn't have seemed like a really *legal* marriage. You know I'm not *mercenary*, and if you had told me *all* I wouldn't have cared a bit, but it's your *deceit* that I can't stand, and it has just *broken my heart*. Farewell forever.

(What She Thought)

And I thought all the time he had money. It just goes to show how careful you have to be.

* * *

FAREWELL THE FOURTH

(What Hypatia Wrote)

It is not likely that we shall ever see each other again. In the last few days and nights I have had all things revealed to me that once were obscure, vague, veiled with a mist of reality that dims the spiritual vision. I have opened my being to the universal love that surges through the world for those who understand, and now I know that my love for you is only such a small part of the whole that it would be a sacrilege to devote my entire life to the enjoyment of it. Oh, yes—I am quite hu-

man. I thrill with the pressure of your lips and the strength of your arms, even more than would a lesser woman who believes that her foolish body is the center of the universe. For I know from whence comes this ecstasy—that it is a bit of everlasting truth, vibrating here for an instant before it passes on to bring joy to others. If you could only see this as I do! If you would only try to overcome that material side of your love, and let it mingle with the universal, then it would not be necessary for me to go. But no matter how hard I have tried, you will not. But while I am far away from you I shall still be near you, and when your love becomes purified of its dross, I shall know it and come, no matter where you may be.

(What She Thought)

When you take a man up to the heights, the first thing he thinks is what a fine location it would be for a home.

* * *

FAREWELL THE FIFTH

(What Agnes Wrote)

So you are going to be married! There was a time when I thought you would marry me; in fact, you hinted at it, but never quite put it into words. And then, later, I knew you would not, because men never marry women they really know. That is not irony—it is truth. Love must always keep reaching out for something just a little beyond, and when I had nothing more to give I knew I had lost you. I don't think you are going to be happy for long, because I don't think any woman is capable of keeping any corner of her life veiled from you. You think that the reason you have turned from me to the woman you are going to marry is that I have children, and am a few years older than you. It isn't that at all. It is simply that I am no longer a mystery. My heart is aching fearfully, and I can write no more.

(What She Thought)

I knew all the time what would hap-

pen, and it was worth the price I knew
I would have to pay.

* * *

FAREWELL THE SIXTH

(What Diana Wrote)

Our relations have become too much of a strain to be continued. It is not that I care so much what would happen if your wife or my husband were to discover our long walks, for—isn't it strange?—most of the time when we are together we are simply disagreeing about literature and philosophy. But, of course, the natural, even if unconscious thing, is to keep it all hidden, and this places a strain upon the mind that prevents it from functioning properly in the matters that, after all, must make up the major portion of my life. If either of us were free, it would be different, but the complications which would ensue upon an exposure are so involved that, subconsciously, they place the whole mental machine at high tension to prevent such a thing. For no matter how careful we may be, and how much cleverer than those others, there is always the possibility of a slip. Besides, I have to make something more out of my life than it is, and for this I must have a free mind for my reading. If we could only drop back to the time when our relations were impersonal, you could be a great help to me, but, of course, that is impossible, for after all we have not passed all our time in weighty debates, have we? Well, I know that this is the last, and already I am wondering what our inevitable casual meetings will be like, when we run across each other from time to time. I am rather anticipating them.

(What She Thought)

Lord, what a relief!

FAREWELL THE SEVENTH (What His Wife Wrote)

Dear Husband: Off here by myself I am able to take a clearer view of things than I was when I left you. There are no more tears, no more pleadings to have you take me back, but just a quiet, calm realization that this is fate, and that there is nothing to be gained, and everything to be lost, by fighting against it. You see, you have been good to me, and that always seemed to be sufficient proof of love, as it is not such a common thing among husbands. And now to learn that it was merely because you felt a spurious, pussy-cat contentment, from which you have been awakened by what you regard as a truly epic love—well, it was rather more than I could bear at first. Now I am beginning to see that the same conditions which were smothering you were doing the same to me. Before we were married I had ambitions, was interested in things worth while. For two years I have not had an idea that you did not give me. I know now that I have my life to remake; that the thing which is really me has never come to light, and that it needed this earthquake to bring it out. I cannot disguise my unhappiness at the loss of your love—or what I mistook for love—but there is a faith in my own destiny now in my heart that prevents this unhappiness from becoming despair. The other love affairs of which you tell me should be a warning to you in this one. But whatever happens, I shall always regard you as my husband.

(What She Thought)

Why, I'm an individual, and not a piece of property. I'm sorry for that other woman.



A TOMBSTONE is an unpleasant reminder of one who has been forgotten.

ES VERDAD

By Edith Wagner

"TELL me a story," said little Juan to his mother one day.

His mother was busy and did not wish to be molested, but she was a mother, so she took her little son in her embrace and began:

"Once there was a fox who was hungry and seeing a crow in a tree with a piece of che—"

"No, mamá," cried little Juan, "please don't tell me that one; tell me one you find in your own head."

His mother thought for a minute.

"Once a mother had two little children," she began. "The name of one was Rosa and the other was Tomas. One day they were each found with a large piece of cheese which had been taken without permission from the pantry. Without doubt each deserved punishment, so the mother with sadness took Tomas in her room, and, holding the rod in her hand, first uttered a few words of admonition. But Tomas began to scream loudly and kick at his mother and pull the rod from her hand. His mother wasted no more beneficial words upon him, but gave him a good whipping, and took away the cheese that he had so unlawfully acquired.

"Then she turned her attention to Rosa, who listened very meekly to her mother's words of wisdom.

"I wish you would give me a kiss first, mamá," cried Rosa, as the rod was about to fall on her.

"Her mother kissed her but, not softened, lifted the rod again. At that Rosa said:

"I do not deserve such indulgence, mamá, but would you please sing to me before my whipping. Your voice is so sweet and lovely that it will help me to bear my deserved punishment."

"At that the mother, greatly pleased with her daughter's love for music, put down the rod and led the way to the piano where she played and sang whilst Rosa noiselessly consumed the cheese her mother had forgotten to take from her. Rosa was so charmed with her mother's singing that the mother continued until the father came home and begged off the promised punishment."

"What is the moral?" asked little Juan, for he was a thoughtful child.

"This story has no moral," answered his mother, "it is the truth."



IN the life of a man there is but one real love. The trouble is that he usually can't tell which one it is.



MOST men think that all women are fools. It is a proof of the wisdom of women that they let the men keep on thinking it.



NEAPOLITAN NIGHTS

By Owen Hatteras

I

NAPLES is feminine. I cannot visualize her save as a woman, very beautiful, intelligent, but far from intellectual, a glorious animal, radiant with an unhampered vitality, swayed by primitive desires, knowing nothing of such geographical distinctions as right and wrong.

Lolling, which she does, upon her couch of blue-gray hills—at dawn these hills are tinted softly like a woman's breasts—she smiles by day, an alluring female, drowsily alert. But by night, as, of course, she would, she decks her body in a myriad jeweled lights, and wraps her warm brown southern arms about you.

Naples, after dark, is irresistible.

II

It was Mina—or was Nina her name?—who, one summer night at the Caffé Gambrinus, showed me Naples' frame of mind.

Outside in the ill-lighted, unpaved square before the elliptical grayness of San Francesco di Paola a band was playing "*Il Conte di Lussemburgo*" with great feeling and incorrectness. The beat of its obvious little waltz crept into the room.

Mina began to hum the tawdry tune. From where I sat I could make out the fountains, two of them, flinging their spray far above the restless throng, as if trying vainly to reach a dreary moon that hung forgotten above the town. Her humming was just one bit too much of local color, an extra note placed on an otherwise perfect canvas by an overanxious artist.

With a gesture I silenced her.

I do not know, nor do I greatly care, if it were the scene, the music or the soft June night that moved her deeply; all I do know is that it was not I, although she would have it so.

Tears filled her warm round eyes as she reached across the arctic table-top and grasped my hand.

"*Dio mio*," she breathed, "but it is sad."

"What is sad?" I questioned.

She shrugged her shoulders, beautiful shoulders, fresh and very young, and her shawl slipped from about her throat, leaving her neck bare, flushed like a cream-pink rose. But her painted lips, a crimson blur for a Matisse to revel in, gave the game away.

Her little forced smile, tragic in its naïveté, grew faint, then disappeared.

"Life here in Napoli is very sad," said she.

(It were cruel to make her Anglicize a word that sounds so sweet as *Napoli*.)

I thought to tell her that life everywhere is sad, but, as I formed the phrase, she raised her *Vermouth Italia* to her lips, sipped it absently, and I saw that her thoughts were far away. It hurt me, rather, to know that I was not a part of them, so, for a long moment, I did not speak.

When I did speak, I told her in my best Berlitz that life in Naples was thought to be very, very gay—*molto, molto allegro*.

She caught me up.

"It is not so," she breathed, "it is not so. Life here in Napoli is not gay, it is merely *spensierato*"—("careless" is not half so nice a word!—"one does not mind what may be in store for one,

nothing seems to matter, just so one gets through life easily."

I tried to show her that in other countries it is phrased differently, that is all; this helpless feeling of a people who no longer understand, to whom things are no longer plain, a people who know too much and who, at the same time, know too little. But she did not comprehend, for Mina—or whatever her name may be!—is part and parcel of the attitude itself. And, on the other hand, my Italian is very bad.

She was most patient with me.

But even so, I can but faintly suggest the poetic phrasing of her vivid Italian; the charm of its steady rise and fall, its musical cadence, its rhythm, its marvelous power of expression.

"It is this way," she explained, gazing across the crowded *piazza* to where the Galleria's glare struck its high staccato note of color. "Here in Napoli we feel differently about those things called right and wrong. That which matters much to you matters not at all to us, and that is why you are what you are, and we are merely—Neapolitans."

With a poignant gesture she dismissed her fellow citizens, and glanced across at me, her eyes aglow with the very real interest every Italian takes in the matter at hand.

The band outside ceased its din, and for a space I could hear the fountains' song beyond the woman's voice; then the white-clad orchestra within the *caffè* broke in with the "*Nichts in der Welt war so weiss wie dein Leib*" of Richard Strauss.

Unconsciously she pushed aside the appurtenances that flecked the table-top, and leaned nearer to me, her cigarette hanging dead between her short, well-modeled fingers. She came so very near that I could feel her warm sweet breath upon my face.

"Pompeii was a city much as we are now, as anyone can see, and where is it, and where are its people to-day? You may see three or four of them locked in each other's arms, still lying where they hid, thinking, by hiding, to escape their fate. But we Neapolitans have

learned that it is not possible to escape one's fate, so we do not try."

Mina sighed; flung her cigarette aside as she smiled at me.

"Just beyond the city gates, *Signore mio*, you may visit populous Resina, and beneath it you may walk in Herculaneum, and beneath that, they say, is yet another town. Do you wonder that we ask, and have always asked, what is the use of all our struggling, all our toil, when the towns are built three deep upon the plain? So we drift, *caro mio*, leaving the past and the future well alone, clutching at what few joys the present may possess."

The orchestra had changed to "*La Spagnola*," and the silly air palpably annoyed her.

"Yes, that is it, we drift," she repeated absently.

She arose suddenly, a thing of fire and of smoldering passion. The wildness of her beauty caught me unaware. Before I could reach her cloak she had slipped it on.

"Come," she commanded, "let us go. Call a *carrozza*, if it pleases you. We, too, shall drift upon the currents of my *Napoli*."

III

A moment later we were in the noisy square, the Via Roma stretching invitingly before us.

All about was the swirl of Naples after dark, that which may be spoken of and that which may not, for the *piazza* of San Ferdinando—the adjacent Galleria Umberto Primo can easily be taken as part of it—is the very core of the city's nocturnal being. Human beings swarming right and left like flies about a honey-pot; the uniforms of sailors and of soldiers mingling with the hardly more sober garb of private citizens; men of all sorts and of all conditions, the male predominating, as it does everywhere in Naples, but, to the foreigner, the male seems none too masculine.

"Ecco!" exclaimed Mina, pressing my arm.

She pointed to where the Galleria's glare flung a shaft of light beyond its roof of glass, while the restless pleasure seekers thronged its huge corridors like figures in some story of the future.

The Galleria is, you feel, somehow—was built to be—the meeting place of all that is most vile in Naples after dark, the forum of the *Mala Vita*, as the underworld is called. Here everyone is dumped into the common bowl, mixed by the spoon of either curiosity or desire; priests, *camorriste*, sailors, soldiers, actors, *ruffiani*, boys from the streets, *forestieri* from the hotels along the *Marina* and from the pensions that cling to the hill where the Parco Margherita is outlined in pinpricks of light.

Here is the most democratic spot in all the world; a community where citizenship is founded upon a strictly monetary basis, a democracy of desire. Its citizens talk and talk and talk in every known and unknown tongue against the noisy orchestra forever pounding out the latest Neapolitan song.

I had found Mina under the glass dome the night before, a little street girl of charming innocence and sweet simplicity of purpose, crying silently, but with undoubted effect, into her already weak Vermouth, while a misshapen moon winked drunkenly beyond the crystal roof.

But, as we drove by, we did not speak of yesterday.

Behind us were the sparkling fountains and the long, low lights of Gambrinus'. On every side the *ristoranti* were aglow with light and gay with music; the tink-tink-tinkle of mandolins, the hum of orchestras, the thrill of high-pitched voices mingling in a brilliant phantasmagoria of sound.

The *ristoranti* stand about the square demanding your *lire*, urging, wordlessly, that here you may forget your cares in excellent wine, music of a fair quality, and women of whatever sort your financial status can command. Here the caffés are in almost unbroken rows: the Caffé Ferrari, outside the Galleria, famous for its German beer and its more than excellent *chianti*, where the

members of the oldest profession in the world first address you in the language of the Fatherland; the Caffé Ristorante Umberto Primo, which is equally famous as the place in which the insidious *Lacrime Christi*—Tears of Christ, if you will!—may be purchased for 80 centimes a litre, and where each female customer carries Murray's International Phrase-Book in her bag; Ai Giardini Reali, opposite the palace gardens, behind the colossal theater of San Carlo; the Caffé Turino, beyond the playing fountains; and the popular Fortunio in the Galleria, where your waiter, fresh from Coney Island, is apt to greet you with a democratic "What's yourn, bo?"

Mina kindly pointed out the Caffé Turco, although I had long ago discovered it, where coffee is one of the things you may obtain in the oriental fashion. As we passed slowly along the Via Roma, the crowds thick about our carriage wheels, the Giardini di Torrino hailed us with its flashing lights and sensuous orchestra, its throngs of visitors, and the *Regina a' Italia* beckoned from beyond.

Turning to Mina I asked would she choose another *caffé*, one more brilliant than Gambrinus', or one of the numerous theaters where they seem to be forever giving "*Aïda*" at half-past nine? On the other hand, I reminded her, "Babylonia"—the Neapolitan "Follies"—was on at the Bellini, and there was a band concert in the Villa Nazionale where you may sit beneath the palms and watch the lighted steamers coming and going across the inky sea.

There was no immediate reply—that is, in words.

Mina slipped her hand in mine, and for a time we threaded the narrow street in silence. Her mood had changed, I could see that. Very fragile she seemed, very winsome, exceedingly desirable.

Her voice grew soft and low and a little throaty, tears welling dangerously near the surface.

"*Signorino*," she whispered, "*Signorino mio*, let us not see Napoli to-night.

I could not bear it, truly I could not."

"What would you do?" I asked.

She turned upon me suddenly.

"Come home with me," she urged.

"I am very, very lonely."

I asked: "And then . . . ?"

If I came, she promised, I would not be sorry.

Her urging pleased me mightily: it was prettily done, artistic. I pretended to hesitate.

"You are sure you want me?" I asked.

We had reached the Largo della Carità by now.

"Yes," she smiled, quite content. "I am very sure I want you."

I let her have her way.

She gave me her address, and, a moment later, our horse's head was turned toward the Via Chiaia, where is the Villa Nazionale, and, beyond, the Bay of Naples.

As I paid the *cocchiere* I could see that a golden moon swung low above Capri, while upon the mighty cliffs Bertolini's put the other stars to shame. There was something in the witchery of the Italian night that urged me, ever so insistently, to say good-bye, to pay her and let her go. Although the night seemed made for romance, it was far too beautiful to soil with even so worthy a counterfeit as this.

Her key turned in the lock, and I could make out where the faint flicker of a lantern disturbed the darkness of a silent court.

"*Entrare*," commanded Mina, softly.

Her voice sounded like a child's.

I slipped some coins into her uncovered hand. They dropped upon the pavement. I could hear them ring.

"You are going?"

She spoke as if she had expected it.

"Yes," I told her, "I am going."

She met Fate smilingly.

"*Va bene*," she said. "*Addio!*"

Without warning she reached toward me.

"Kiss me good-bye," she breathed.

I could not do that.

Turning away, I left her, and when realization came upon me I was on

the Mergellina, alone with the dying moon.

IV

As I loafed hotelward along the Marina, Vesuvius, trailing a golden feather along an opalescent sky, was silhouetted against the dawn. I could see the early fishing boats upon the bay. I could hear the plaintive morning song of the fishermen, but Capri had not as yet emerged from the enveloping mist. Never before had Naples appeared so feminine, so incomprehensible.

This town of Mina's—if Mina was her name!—is exotic, erotic, decadent—good old-fashioned word—if you will, but, paradoxical as it may seem, she is straightforward with it all. Her decadency—let us call it so—is not smeared with pseudo-gilt like that of, say, Paris or Vienna, nor is it clad in calico like that of London. Then, again, neither does this decadency of hers bear the vulgar recentness of New York's, the cheap superficial smartness; here in Naples there is history, world history, behind it, backing it up, as it were, a definite cause for an equally definite effect. Her vice is honest vice.

To your visitor fresh from the strawberry festivals of Middletown, Naples, even by day, is a den of iniquity, a godless, filthy city of noise and dirt unbelievable, a latter-day Gomorrah, a city to see with half-shut eyes and nose held high. This Middletownese should visit the museum (there is no need for him to penetrate to its secret room), a church or two (they are open in the early morning for a little while), and should then pass on to Sorrento, having admired the view from the *terrazza* at Bertolini's over a cup of excellent tea and the din from a group of unbelievably Neapolitan *cantante*.

But for the Pagan, whose name is legion, there is a great deal more to do and see. Naples by day and Naples by night is a civic Jekyll and Hyde, although in this case Mr. Hyde is a very pleasant gentleman of the world, with manners above reproach. Naples, as

I say, should be approached paganly, with a careless heart and an open mind.

And remember this: No matter what you think of her, no matter what you write or say, she will not care, nor will she mend her ways. She was here long, long before you and I and our moralities—call her Cumae and she must acknowledge 3,000 years—and, you can read it on her very walls, she will be, morally, quite unchanged when you and I and our beliefs are deader than Pompeii will ever be.

V

The Naples memory that lingers in the mind is the memory of the Old Town that the stranger seldom sees, even by day; the Naples of the narrow, narrow streets that go on and on, mile after mile, changing to steps as they climb the hill toward the Vomero; the Naples of the tall, forbidding tenements that spill their countless occupants from every window and from every door; the Naples of the crude oil lights that waver in the breeze that eternally creeps along the ways—the Naples of the Neapolitans.

On every side numberless shrines hold you safe from harm, some large and astonishingly commodious, illuminated like any shop window, where electric bulbs are used for candles and blessings are purchased by the kilowatt; others old and soiled and very dear, where an ancient faith still clings and the candles splutter in the evening air.

There is a small *caffé* nestling beneath the Castello dell'Ovo—the castle Virgil built upon an egg—close beside the bay, where you may sit and watch the pulsing glow that hangs above the old part of the town and Vesuvius' wavering smoke as well—the Caffé Starita, which, as I take it, means the Café Stay Awhile. It was here that I was served by Salvatore of the laughing eyes, who told me, with a great deal of admirable gesticulation, that until I had seen the Old Town, the Eastern Quarter, between the Via Roma

and the harbor, I had really not seen Naples at all.

He urged me mightily.

With the fish came news of the dimly lighted, kaleidoscopic streets; of the harsh cry of the vendors of edibles; of the carts from which you may buy anything from a collar-button to a crucifix. With the meat I heard of the hideous cry of the *giornalisti*, who make the night hideous “but very picturesque, signore,” telling of the coming of tomorrow’s papers; of the swinging lanterns of the *mozzonari*, hunting for cigar ends and other useful trifles; of the card games going on forever in the open; and of the occasional *stiletto* that comes forth to fulfil its destiny.

With the salad I learned of how the cooks set up their stoves in the open air and cry aloud the worthiness of their fish, their meat, their *macaroni*; of how quack doctors extol their nostrums in endless harangues, which they punctuate by the drawing of perfectly good teeth; of how, in the vicinity of the Mole, the impassioned public reader still holds forth on the glories of Italian history. But when, with the coffee, came tales of *mariionetti* and their performances of sere and melodrama, seasoned with vague and would-be frightful hints of the *ruffani* that take them in, I promised Salvatore that, later, he might conduct me to the marionettes at least. More I would not promise.

I found the tiny theater hiding near the harbor’s edge, and as I arrived Richard Coeur de Lion was roaring to his heart’s content before several very bored and filthy boys and two or three mild looking *ruffani*. The performance seemed interminable, filled with more or less historical hysteria. A man’s and then a woman’s voice wailed endlessly against the preoccupation of the audience. The small boys kept up an unceasing flow of conversation and smoked countless cigarettes, reaching up to scratch their matches on the floor of Richard’s well-worn palace. The grown-ups bought sweets with ostentation, and watched the figures not at all.

At last Salvatore penetrated to where

I sat within my royal box, trying to appear as regal as I could beneath the interested gaze of the entire audience, to say nothing of a head which came from behind the stage, up-side down, filling the proscenium with alarming effect, taking me in with rolling eyes. I welcomed Salvatore's suggestion that we move on to other sights. Even the streets promised more amusement than this evil smelling, all but deserted theater.

Nevertheless, he kept his promise in the streets. These, at least, lived up to the reputation he had given them. Gay they were, full of color and animation, alive with swarming multitudes in costumes fantastic and bizarre.

Torches flared above carts piled high with peppers of orange, red and green in their most brilliant hues. Beneath the flickering lights the people bought and bartered. Often I caught the gleam of pearly teeth beneath a brilliant head-dress that all but veiled the wearer's eyes as she chatted with her lover, he who wore the crimson sash and carried an unlighted cigarette above his ear, while another, with tip aglow, dangled from his ruddy lips, beneath the soft down of his mustache.

The altars, hundreds of them, guarded us, as Salvatore had said, and the noises were even more appalling than he had promised, which pleased him noticeably. One by one he produced his turns and marshalled me before them. Everywhere were savage-looking men with crimson scarfs about their throats, one with a flower stuck in his hat, another wearing a bloom behind his ear, painfully picturesque, each minding his own affairs with complete success. And everywhere were courtesy, respect and friendly interest.

This, I felt, was Naples.

Love, frank and unashamed, on every side; quarrels; women's summoning eyes; the answering gleam of men's; all the passions to which mankind is heir displayed where all might see, but natural passions, every one.

Here sat a withered crone, as ancient as the world; there a sad-eyed

madonna nursed a baby in the open door, a sweet *madonna* who brought Mina to mind. About our feet *bambini* by the dozen sprawled upon the pavement, their pulchrious anatomy displayed in careless naturalism. Shocking things we came upon, that is, shocking to the Anglo-Saxon mind. But, as for me, I liked to linger here. With all its crudity, the scene rang true. It was sincere, and, say what you will, sincerity is the greatest virtue of them all.

It was in the Vicolo San Guadioso—I shall never forget the name of that little thoroughfare hidden somewhere behind the bulk of San Dominico Maggiore!—that I rediscovered the woman of the warm round eyes.

"*Dio mio!*" she cried. "What is the *signorino* doing here?"

I told her that I was learning of the real Naples, the Naples that I might easily learn to love.

"The Naples," I added, "where *you* belong."

She replied with pretty seriousness. "Yes, this is *my* Napoli after all."

It seemed a very human place.

She laughed with soft contentment. "*Signorino*, I have returned."

For the first time I noticed that her lips were soft and free from paint, and it seemed that a different expression had come into her eyes. She took my hand, very simply, and, as I thought, very honestly.

"You have returned?" I repeated, stupidly.

"My mother was very glad," said she. "She is waiting for me now."

And then:

"*Addio!*"

Before I could speak, she had disappeared.

VI

This, then, is the Naples that I urge to linger in my mind:

A sweet-faced girl, with warm, round eyes, standing beneath a mildly lighted shrine, a narrow street scaling a distant hill behind her, a misty moon swimming overhead.

The memory of the other Naples, the Naples of the Piazza San Ferdinando, I try to put aside; the city whose soul was made before the seven deadly sins, where, the night following my excursion

to the Old Town, I came upon Mina—if that really was her name!—seated in the Galleria, cigarette in hand, explaining Naples' point of view to an interested American *signor*.



BITTERNESS

By Sara Teasdale

Sometimes within my heart I know
The long rebellion of the sea,
Under the whip of every wind
Slave of the moon eternally.

I know the lonely heart of hills
Prisoned forever from the sky,
Watching against the heaven's breast
The frail and foolish clouds go by.

All night I hear and understand
The cry of useless winter rain,
For I, a sister to the stars,
Am strangely close skin to pain.



WHEN MIND MEETS MIND

THE crash of onyx upon porphyry, the dull thumping of empty cocoanuts, the shrill whistle of windmills in a gale, the yowling of tom-cats on nights of amour, the explosion of red-hot bladders, the bleating of sheep on lonely moors, the clash of tin swords, the rattling of dumb-waiters, the braying of ravished jackasses, the snorting of hippopotami, the squeaking of hautboys and bag-pipes, the gurgle of cut jugulars, the cracking of sclerotic knees, the blowing up and busting of logic, the torture and death of the English language . . . a meeting of the House of Representatives of the United States.



THE devil makes his living by introducing tired men to curious women.



IF hammocks could talk no one would care to listen to church pews.



BACHELORS know more about women than married men. If they didn't they'd be married too.



HIS FIRST QUARREL

By Homer Croy

ORVIL deliberately finished chancing shirt studs before he answered. Although he felt his heart gathering speed, he kept himself calm enough to fling back a biting answer. "Well, go home to your mother, then." Then he added, knowing full well the wound in the words: "I only hope that your welcome there will be proportionate to your farewell here." He delivered the words theatrically.

It was their first quarrel. He turned it over with his laboratory mind. It gave him a thrill to know that he was in the midst of the first quarrel, even as the first kiss had. Before his marriage he had imagined the minutia of their first quarrel: how he would act, the manner he would carry, the side he would show. And now that time was upon him. He would not be of those hysterical ones who race along in a quarrel flinging out words, like the leader in a college boys' fox-and-hound flinging out paper—he would know every word that he dropped. And what pleased him more than anything else was that he was bearing himself just as he had planned.

"Maybe," he said, spacing each word as he polished a stud with a laborious care that he knew was not lost on her, "maybe you had better telephone her before you go—she hates to have anyone dropping in at dinner without word in advance, you know."

Slipping into his shirt, he fastened the studs and elaborately brushed his hair back over his ears before he turned to face her with more planned words. "Of course, you won't want to go to the theater," with a breath on *you* as if to imply that he would go alone

and for her to put the key in its accustomed place.

"Why, what do you mean?" she demanded with a lightness that logically seemed to him she should be incapable of. "Of course, I want to go to the theater—I've been looking forward to it all week." This lightness was something that he didn't understand; it was the only thing in their first quarrel different from what he had imagined it would be. He was conducting himself just as he knew he would, and saying the words with all the deliberation he could wish. But she—she was not making the answers she should. He was ready to drop deliberate words on them—on any cut she might deliver—but she wasn't saying what he expected.

Nor were there any tears.

He knew what to say when she fled to tears.

"Of course, Orvil, I want to go. It'll be so jolly—just us comfy two."

He paused with the tie half inserted. She was lightly filling her vanity-box and even—he could hardly believe it—even humming a tune.

"Aren't you," he asked, surprised out of his deliberation, "aren't you going home to your mother?"

"Why, of course, not, you silly. I couldn't do that unless we quarreled, could I, dear?"

"Haven't we—quarreled?" he asked weakly, selecting a fresh tie.

"Orvil, you goose, of course, not. A quarrel is something awful and both people say things they wish they hadn't. You'll know it—if it ever comes. But let's not think of anything so dreadful. We'll have to run—here's the key."

A SPLASH OF SCARLET

By Gertrude Macauley

YOU see, I am not pretty, and I am not young, and I am not rich, nor am I even married, yet I am a woman.

So I said to myself, "You are just the person to play, now that you are at Monte Carlo."

Why? Well, first, foremost and superstitiously because somewhere, somehow, I thought, there must be some luck awaiting me, and I had certainly had no glint of it in my many drab days.

Secondly, and sensibly, because I had none to consider but myself.

So I gathered what cash I could and I walked into the Casino. I was not conspicuously green. I knew how it should be done. Turning to the room on my left I presented my visiting card, and, after giving my local address, the town originally responsible for me, and a couple of signatures, I was presented with a pink card and bowed out.

I strolled into the gaming rooms, looked at several tables, finally selected one and timidly slid several louis onto the green before the *croupier*, murmuring, "*Monnaie, s'il vous plaît.*"

Large silver bits automatically replaced my tiny gold bits. I took these gratefully.

Oh, I was very apologetic. Something in me was saying, "Of course, you are a raw greenie; they despise you as silly, cheap and ignorant of the ropes."

Everybody had little pencils and pads, laboriously noting each number and colour for future consultation.

My nerve returned. They were the fools, not I. At least I knew I played for luck, no more. With scorn of

noting the previous colours, I staked on red. Was it not the colour of blood and wine, lips that call for love, madness, youth and passion—the colour of everything that had escaped me?

Had Fate no sense of humor?

"*Messieurs, faites, vos jeux!*"

My face grew hot. I tried to look unconcerned, and succeeded in setting a stiff, burning mask around my eyes. Them I could not master.

The wheel spun, the ball raced around.

"*Rien ne va plus!*"

The whole room spun.

After an eternity of circling, the hoarse voice rang out again.

"*Rouge—Trente-deux!*"

I had won. I waited in calm exultation. I was to get it back from life.

The *croupiers* raked in the losses and dealt out the gains. From the moment I put into my burning left palm, among the warmed five-franc pieces already there, the cool, unfevered disc of the Casino, from that moment I knew that I must play that sordid game till it should make or break me.

I slipped into a seat, which a painted lady vacated with a tiny shrug and empty hands.

Dear God, what would she? *Everything?* She had the clothes, the diamonds, the red lips, and even youth. There must be *some* justice.

I stayed. I played.

For two hours I played. Then I rose. My cheeks were fire, and my face felt as if it were receding from around my eyes.

My purse was quite empty.

I walked across the Salon.

I felt no grievance. I was merely

enlightened. The Fates were consistent. Many years ago, when I began, they had marked me a Loser.

There is not much use caring.

A man who has been playing opposite to me was walking out also, his hands busily separating notes from gold. Good to look at he was, tall, well-groomed, and clean of cut. In the original sorting they had marked him a winner.

He caught me looking at his gains, and smiled.

"Madame had poor luck?"

I am too drab to misunderstand friendliness. I smiled back, and was surprised to hear my lips retort:

"And do I look like one who would have good luck?"

His eyebrows raised a shade. He moved closer. I returned his look squarely.

Why should I care?

I felt his eyes roam over my unpretentious face and clothes. He walked a few steps beside me. Then he was talking to me again, pleasantly, naturally. He remarked the hour. Had I dined, would I not join him? Oh, merely a friendly dinner. He saw I was a bit down?

Why should I care?

He seemed to remember that I was a woman. Usually men see in me only a neuter.

I thanked him awkwardly, and said I would be pleased, but that I was not even clever.

He smiled.

We had stepped over to the Hôtel de Paris, and I was in the dressing-room before I quite realized that the woman who had gambled heavily, lost her little all, picked up a strange man in the Casino, and was about to dine with him, that this loose character actually lived in the same body as that other adventureless woman I knew so well.

I looked in the mirror with unwonted interest. My eyes traveled to the array of intricate make-up on the dressing-table.

I was very wearied of the woman

who had lived in my body so many years, and brought me so little out of life. She had not even been clever. She had accepted things.

I signalled the maid, and asked her to please make up my face.

"Not too much rouge, nor too heavily powdered, but do what you can with my eyes and mouth."

She looked surprised, eyed me up and down, and smiled. Her humor and her art were appealed to.

She darkened, and blued, and veined around my eyes; she rouged my nostrils, the lobes of my ears and my mouth; then she gave the thinnest dusting of flesh-colored powder.

"Madame is very chic—so."

I did not see in the mirror the woman with whom I have always lived.

The little maid arranged my hair modishly with a few deft pins, and adjusted my hat to the angle of the moment.

I showed her my empty purse, shrugged gaily, and explained, "Oh, such bad luck to-day! But after dinner I will return."

"Thank you, Madame."

I looked again in the mirror. The woman in it was rather pretty, and distinctly interesting.

I laughed. I was anxious to see how she would act and talk.

He was awaiting me in the corridor. I walked to him, looked up into his face confidently, and smiled. Faint puzzlement narrowed his experienced eyes.

"I am not nearly so plain now, am I?"

I lightly pointed to my eyes and mouth. He looked critically, nodded a couple of times, and agreed slowly:

"It is an improvement. Yes, it is."

Conversation flagged utterly then until we were seated, he had ordered, and the dinner had commenced.

I had a horrible fear that the new me might fizzle out. He leaned over, closed his hand lightly on mine.

"Never mind talking. Drink first."

I was very grateful. I felt rather misty.

"You are very kind. I have improved my face for you. In a few mo-

ments I will brighten up my conversation."

I raised my glass. As I was drinking a man at a neighbouring table stared. The paint had done that.

I made myself drink more than is usual for me. I grew confident. He watched quietly, then again he leaned forward, and put his hand over mine. This time he said persuasively:

"Now tell me all about it."

"But it is so very dull," I pouted.

"Even so."

"And besides I came with you that I might forget."

He was silent a moment, before—

"Only this, then: are things very bad?"

I looked straight into his eyes that were so very much older than his face, dropped my soot-weighted lashes a moment, then looked up again and laughed. The champagne freed my tongue.

"I am so very happy that when I go to sleep to-night I don't want ever, ever, ever to—"

"Yes, to?"

"To wake up."

I laughed and sipped my glass. I knew I had said something cheering, if trite.

He frowned.

"You see," I explained volubly, while my eyes and hands seemed eager to talk along with my lips, "when one reaches one's high-water mark, when, oh, when all your days have been poky and your nights lonesome, and then, suddenly," I laughed and extended my hands to the gay scene, "this, and you." The hussy within my body looked challengingly into his eyes. "Well, one does not want to return to the dusty days to come."

"Why let them be dusty?"

"Look at me!"

He looked at me, till gradually the room grew misty in the corners, the marble pillars wobbled, the dark insolence of the man at the next table was distorted into a leering satyr, the glass and silver before me became a bed of dazzling brilliants, everything was swaying, everything but his keen, weary eyes. I was losing my breath. My hand

moved forward, my lips just managed to falter.

"Please!"

He smiled. "Yes?"

"Please—do not look at me—so."

"You have never been in love."

And then the woman with the painted lips and eyes, who had taken my drab body, was at ease. She laughed. She raised her champagne and her eyes.

"But I am always in love! You do not believe me?"

She breathed deep till my breast rose, and my eyes dilated and my lips parted to drink in a queer, heady atmosphere. She leaned toward my handsome companion.

"*M'sieu*," she murmured, "you, who know me so well, you ask me *that*?"

Why did she call him *M'sieu*? Neither he nor I were French.

Hardly waiting his reply, she hurried volubly on, in a voice that was not mine.

"*M'sieu*, and for what are my eyes dark, and my lips so red? Oh," with a laugh and a shrug, "but you are not usually so dull! Remember our other nights."

"What other nights?" he queried automatically. His face was changing.

"Those nights, those nights in Paris! My God, they *were* nights! When the wine ran like water, and you were young, and I—"

Something caught in his throat. "And you—you were older than I, and you were—"

"Oh, but you mistake! I am *always* young."

He frowned. "What do you mean? What are you talking of?"

I felt myself leaning back, my hands clasped, my arms rigid before me, my eyelids drooping (they were so very heavy these last minutes!), and still the woman in my body talked on.

My God, what queer things she was saying! And how his face distorted under her words.

What a life she must have had! I never knew Paris was like that. But he did, for his eyes jumped to her words as a thirsty dog to water.

It seemed indecent to listen, such undreamed follies did she revive in his memory.

Have you ever held your breath for a very long time, perhaps trying to pass some unwholesome air before you again inhale—and gradually you feel that you can hold out no longer, you *must* breathe?

It was so with me then. I seemed a long way off, floating in space, while this woman lived, and breathed, and spoke through my mouth, and I must suffocate unless I soon returned to my body. It was agony. Would she *never* stop?

I was fainting. Miles away I heard her whispering some wickedness into his forward-bent head. He breathed thickly. His eyes frightened me.

"Who—are—you?" he jerked out.

If she did not leave my body, I was dying.

"I—am—"

But she never finished. With a choking spasm, I got a breath, a convulsion ran through my body, I was no longer in space, I was gasping heavily for air, my head dropped forward on the table.

"Go on," he muttered hoarsely.

I raised my head, and looked blankly at him. Folds of lead weighed on my arms and legs, weariness like death flowed through me. I felt very stupid.

Why was he looking at me so?

"I—I have been saying some—some very stu—stupid things. The—the wine, you know," I hiccupped.

He rose, lifted me by the arm, and half led, half pushed me across the dining-room, and the rotunda, out past the door lackeys into the air.

He placed me in a taxi. I sat stupidly. I could not think. He returned for our wraps. In a minute he was with me again.

I did not hear his order to the chauffeur. I think I fell asleep.

It must have been some time before I awoke, for we were on the Lower Corniche road, half way to Nice, when I managed to look about me.

My hair was disordered, my hat awry. I had dreamed that someone was kissing me—very sinfully.

The taxi was open. The sea air blew in. He bent over me.

"You are better now?"

I nodded. Then I said weakly:

"But I am not living in Nice. I am at a pension in Mentone. Will you, please—"

But he interrupted me fiercely.

"You are living with me."

My heart missed a beat. I remonstrated, I cried, I begged. He would not turn. He kept muttering something about—

"After all these years—dead so long—you promised you would return—somehow—"

Terror seized me. He was a lunatic.

"But you do not realize," I begged. "I trusted you! I—"

Then he changed. He dropped his head in his hands a moment, then leaned out and spoke to the chauffeur. The car turned.

He was grey-pale.

"I am sorry," he said simply. "You do not understand."

Neither of us spoke till he handed me out of the taxi. I was weary to idiocy.

"Thank you for my one evening of life," I muttered.

He raised his hat in silence.

It is years since I wrote the above. He has never come back. I have never lived again.

He said I did not understand. May be I do not.

But, oh, the dull days drag, and the old maid who lives in my body is so colourless and tired of the cold hours that at night I lie awake, and cry to that other, long dead, to return and live again.

Sometimes I paint my eyes and rouge my mouth, trying to lure her back, but the wrinkles are thick, and I know she laughs at my face.

LE BOHÈME

THE ROMANCE OF AN ARTIST'S MODEL

By Frank R. Adams

VALERIE VAN DER BOCK stood before her easel and gritted her teeth impotently. How she had worked to win the award to paint the frieze over the bulletin board in the new railroad station! And now that she had it, how maddening to be unable to complete the work for the lack of a proper model.

It was all done except the central figure. This was to be of heroic size and was supposed to represent "Purity." The sketch, which had been approved by Dr. Wiley, was of a handsome young man gazing fearlessly at the world with a bottle of Clysmic in one hand and a bar of Ivory Soap in the other.

The famous young artist had plenty of soap and plenty of water. The manufacturers had kindly sent her many cases of each when they heard of her plan. All of her friends now came to Valerie's studio to take baths. But the man to look heroic between the two components of lather could not be found.

Valerie Van der Bock had exhausted the model agencies. There was no professional model who met her requirements. She had turned to the stage and given tentative trials to men in the chorus. Even at the Winter Garden she failed.

In despair she had tramped the length of her studio all day long trying to think up some avenue, as yet untried, where she might find what she was seeking.

Came a timid rap at the door.

Not turning, Valerie murmured, "Enter."

The door opened softly, but the visitor, whoever it was, did not speak and Valerie lost in thought quickly forgot that there was anyone else in the room.

It was with a shock of surprise that she turned a moment later to find herself face to face with a young man carrying a covered basket on his arm. The shock of seeing someone in the room was quickly obliterated by the greater shock of realizing that there stood before her the very person she had been looking for ever since she had begun her greatest canvas.

He was tall and well proportioned with finely modeled hands and feet. The clothes that he wore were shabby but clean and his cuffs had been neatly trimmed with a pair of shears. But his face! That was what attracted Valerie. It was absolutely innocent. It looked as innocent as a banana peeling on a cement sidewalk.

The lad was evidently embarrassed by her silent scrutiny. He shifted uneasily from one foot to another and said in a low pathetic voice, "Won't you please buy a Ford, miss. I've been tramping the streets since seven o'clock and I've only sold three all day." He made a motion as if to uncover his basket.

Valerie stopped him with an impatient gesture. "No," she said.

He was obviously disappointed and sighed.

"I'm sorry," he said pathetically. "I don't care so much for myself but it's hard on my poor old father. If I don't sell one more before night I won't have money enough to buy him a crust of stale bread for his supper."

The girl was thinking rapidly and did not pay much attention to his words. The burden of her thought was that she must not lose this model.

"You are poor, you say?" she inquired.

"Desperately," he replied. "Father was rich once but that was before the war."

"Ah, he was an old -Southern planter?"

"No, a manufacturer of Paris labels for hats and gowns. I meant before the European war. There is no market for the labels now." He dropped his hands in a gesture of despair. The basket fell to the floor, rattling, but he was so used to it that he did not notice.

"If you are poor," Valerie went on eagerly, "then you don't care what you do?"

A slow flush spread over the lad's features.

"Don't think because you see me peddling these," he indicated his basket, "that I have no sense of shame. My God, it was hard to bring myself to it. I've never told father. It would kill him. He thinks I am a pickpocket." He stood for a moment, tense, then turned toward the door. "I must go on," he said wearily.

"No," exclaimed the artist. "Stay."

Wondering, the lad retreated a step.

"I mean you no harm," Valerie soothed eagerly. "I am an artist and I want you to pose for me."

The boy did not reply.

"Here," she continued. "I will give you enough money to choke your father with stale bread crusts if that is what he likes. Only pose for me an hour or so a day and you can leave your odious employment."

"Why do you tempt me?" The young man approached her timidly as if drawn by a magnet. "You have no right to take advantage of me because I am poor."

"Then you consent. Hurry. I must work before the daylight fades. There is the dressing room. Get ready." She led the youth to a small apartment sepa-

rated from the studio by heavy velvet curtains.

The boy paused at the door. "What costume do I wear?" he faltered.

The artist rummaged among a pile of line sketches on a table.

"Here is a sketch of the figure and the pose," she said, handing it to him.

The boy took it and shivered. "It looks cold," he murmured.

"Of course. This mural decoration is a frieze. Now hurry." She pushed him through the door.

Valerie Van der Bock belonged to one of the old Knickerbocker families, so called because they practically live at the Knickerbocker bar. In spite of the fact that she was so well connected and would never have needed to work for a living, Valerie was not proud. In spite of protests she had attended Art School and gone to Paris to finish up her technical education. She took art seriously and claimed to see beautiful *au naturel* ladies in futurist paintings resembling a towel in a job printing office.

And through it all she had passed unscathed. No romance of the Latin Quarter, no *pension à deux*, had ever entered her life. She had told herself that she had no time for nonsense and when her fellow students revelled she had toiled to become the master of her vocation.

Therefore she seemed a little serious. The light of a steadfast purpose shone in her beautiful brown eyes. Clean cut, erect of figure, always immaculate, save when wearing her painter's blouse, she attracted the eye of many a languishing youth of whose existence she was not aware. Unconscious of her good looks, she had never heard the sighs that went up in her wake.

The curtains parted and the young man stepped shyly into the studio. He had found a silken dressing gown and he clasped it tightly about him.

Valerie arranged the model throne and gave him the props—the bottle of water and the soap. He mounted the platform and with perfect natural grace assumed at once the pose as she had

sketched it. The dressing gown fell from his shoulders.

Valerie worked like mad. After a while the young man realized that she regarded him as a chunk of clay instead of a human being and his blushes receded to his face.

Only once did she address a personal remark to him. "What is your name?" she asked carelessly.

"Henry Bierbender," he replied.

"A pretty name," she murmured, repeating it to herself.

She went on with her work. Indefatigable herself, she forgot that Henry had not her strength and she laid on the color by the pound.

At last toward dusk she looked up and discovered with alarm that her model was swaying on the platform and at his lips appeared a white froth. Valerie rushed to his side and, throwing the cloak over his shoulders, supported him to a couch.

"What has happened?" she demanded, with belated concern.

The white bubbles crowded to his lips. He nodded his head weakly first toward one hand and then the other. She followed his gaze and the explanation flashed over her. He had eaten the soap and drunk the water.

"Forgive me," he pleaded weakly. "I didn't think you would ever know."

"You poor thing," she exclaimed sympathetically. "You were hungry."

"Very," Henry assented.

Valerie was overcome with remorse because she had not thought of her model's comfort before. Fortunately there were supplies in the studio and she soon prepared a cup of tea and some sandwiches which Henry Bierbender ate daintily.

He sat opposite to her at a tiny wicker table and regarded her with a wan troubled smile. It was as if he did not quite know whether to trust her or not. She wondered if he had read a studio story somewhere that had prejudiced him against her profession.

Truly he was a distracting sight in the soft silk robe which luxuriantly

swathed his figure. Valerie sighed as she realized how perfectly he satisfied her ideal of what a man should look like. She wondered if the faint stirrings in her bosom could be the germs of sentiment. For fear they were she absently ate a Formamint tablet.

"You are very lovely."

Valerie had not meant to speak aloud and they both blushed at her words. Henry Bierbender dropped his eyes and scrutinized his teacup through his luxuriant lashes.

II

THAT night he tripped home, light of heart, with fifty cents in his pocket which she had forced on him as pay for his first afternoon's work, although he assured her that he could get two loaves of stale bread for a nickel.

He did not tell his aged father where the money came from, however. Some subtle instinct told him that the old man, who belonged to another and stricter generation, might not approve of his handsome son's enterprise.

All evening as he cleared away the dishes and swept up the crumbs of stale bread that old man Bierbender had dropped on the floor of their tiny apartment, Henry kept thinking of the words that Valerie Van der Bock had spoken that afternoon. Henry had never thought of himself as noticeably handsome before, no one had ever commented on his looks. His father, partly to shield his son from the world, and partly because of necessity, had always dressed him very plainly and had brushed his hair straight back and plastered down the curls with tallow. At this one word of admiration from a member of the opposite sex Henry blossomed like a rose, new visions opened before him.

He was still thinking happily in this fashion when he and his father retired to their folding bed which served as a gas stove during the daytime. The transformation was made by turning the stove around and pulling down the counterweighted bed, which was held

on the floor by the weight of its occupants.

Old Mr. Bierbender went to sleep almost immediately but Henry was restless with his new happiness, and after an hour, when he was sure that his father was soundly sleeping, he crept from the bed and lighted a candle.

With this in his hand he stood in front of the cheval glass which was the sole remnant of their former glory that Henry had saved from the pawnbroker. The boy ran his fingers through his hair to make it fluffy and then draped his night-shirt becomingly. At last with candle held aloft gracefully he gazed long at his reflection in the mirror.

At last he sighed.

"She is right," he murmured softly to the reflection. "You are very, very lovely."

When he turned to get back into bed again he discovered that, deprived of his weight, it had closed up against the wall with his aged father inside of it.

Henry Bierbender shuddered. Was it an omen?

III

EVERY day the young man spent part of his time in the studio of the eminent artist. When he was not posing he busied himself happily in arranging and taking care of Valerie's belongings. One day the artist found her stockings neatly darned and the buttons sewed on her underwear. Henry admitted blushingly that he had done it in spare moments.

Valerie said nothing but she smiled complacently to herself. It was nice to have a man about. Already her rooms had taken on an indefinable air—there was a masculine touch that made them more homelike.

The picture was nearly complete. Neither of them spoke about it but they both knew that after a few days there would be no legitimate excuse for the continuation of the intimacy which had grown so dear to both of them. A cloud settled over their gayety. They smiled at one another but it was through a veil of unshed tears.

Valerie had stepped out for a moment. Henry, resting meanwhile, had thrown the dressing gown carelessly over his shoulders and reclined at full length on the couch. He was thinking sadly that tomorrow would be the end.

Someone walked in unceremoniously. It was not Valerie. How well he knew her step. He looked up. It was a strange young man, rather handsome but somewhat a trifle coarse.

"Hello," he greeted casually. "Miss Van der Bock in?"

"No," replied Henry, not liking the visitor very much.

"All right. I wonder if she wants a model. I don't suppose she does if you've got the job."

The young man looked around the room impudently. "Say," he whistled, "things are fixed up fancy around here. Van der Bock never did this. She's too much interested in her work to fuss."

"I did it," volunteered Henry, shortly.

"That's what I thought," said the other. "So you landed her, did you? Well, Van der Bock has broken her record."

"Her record?"

"Yeh. Heretofore she has been the only unmarried artist in the colony who didn't live with her model."

With a jaunty "Good day," the youth left.

Henry pondered over his last remark and when the full significance of the word "heretofore" struck him, he burst into tears. So that was what people thought.

Valerie found him weeping and demanded to know the cause. After much urging Henry told her of the interview with the professional model.

"People will never know," he sobbed, "that I have always been a good boy."

"There is one way to stop all gossip," suggested Valerie, formally.

"What's that?"

"Will you marry me?"

Henry's lips said "No," but his eyes said "Yes," and Valerie slowly gathered him to her arms.

IV

THUS Henry Bierbender became engaged to Valerie Van der Bock.

On the day that the frieze was hung over the bulletin board in the new railroad station Valerie took her fiancé to luncheon to meet her family. They had not been told of the engagement and exhibited well-bred surprise when Valerie introduced him as her future husband. She volunteered no explanations as to where they had met and the family naturally did not ask in his presence.

The mother was a gay old person, whose youthful tastes had persisted in spite of years. It was she who insisted on drinking to the engagement every few minutes.

Mr. Van der Bock was very dignified, a gentleman of the old school, who evidently thought the world was divided into two classes—those who were fortunate enough to be Van der Bocks and those who had to bear up under the burden of being just plain people. He regarded with disapproval the levity of his wife, but mentioned it only with his eyes, which constantly telegraphed instructions to her to subside.

The other children, two boys younger than Valerie, had evidently been schooled by their father and they, too, were uncomfortably conscious of the name they bore. Their manner gave Henry to understand that they welcomed him to the family subject to approval.

After luncheon Mrs. Van der Bock proposed that they all go and examine the new frieze.

Henry turned pale. "I'd rather not," he murmured. A premonition of evil obsessed him.

The old lady, pleasantly warm from the wine she had taken at luncheon, was politely insistent and finally they started.

Before the tremendous canvas they stood awestruck as have so many thousands on beholding its splendor for the first time. Even Henry, who had seen it in the studio, gasped a little and

wondered if he were really one-tenth as lovely as the picture.

Then a chill struck his spine. Without looking he knew that Mr. Van der Bock was comparing his features with those of the undraped central figure in the picture. His heart sank in his boots.

"You," said the stern old man, as if picking him up between his thumb and forefinger and dropping him into a vat of disinfectant, "you posed for that picture?"

Henry blushed. "Yes."

"In the same costume, I presume."

Henry bent his head.

Nothing further was said, but in a subtle way the old man gathered his two boys to his side as if to protect them from contamination.

Mrs. Van der Bock had heard the spoken remarks but failed to catch the by-play. She moved closer to Henry and pinched his arm.

"If that's you," she announced a trifle loudly, "I have to admit that Valerie inherits her good taste from her mother."

"Julia," came a warning tone like the hiss of a rattler. Mrs. Van der Bock collapsed and beat a hasty retreat from Henry's side.

That night Henry cried himself to sleep on the folding bed.

In the morning came a note from Valerie's father couched in the cruel, polite diction that only a man knows how to use toward another man.

"Dear Sir:—

Of course you will realize the folly of your projected marriage. It would mean ruin for Valerie in every way. She depends upon society for her patronage and you can easily see how society, which overlooks many things, would draw away from her if she married her model. You know what people would say. Let me know by return mail how much you will require to quietly disappear without explanations. If you love Valerie it is the only thing you can do.

Mr. Julia Van der Bock.

P. S.—*My wife agrees with me fully in this matter.*"

Sick at heart Henry tore the note to bits and then picked up the folding bed and gas stove and started out the door.

"What's the matter?" said his dear old father, who was looking on in amazement.

The boy paused a moment sadly in the door and looked around at the place where he had spent so many happy hours dreaming of the future. He shook his head.

"Come on, father dear," he said gently. "We're going to move."

Valerie, acclaimed as the premier railroad station frieze of America, was flooded with commissions for similar work. But the old fire was gone. She went to the studio but her days were barren. The room reminded her too poignantly of him. Every way that she turned there were subtle reminders of the happy by-gone days. She sat for hours one day holding in her hands an old shoe that he had left behind.

Then when the pain became unbearable she would go out and tramp the streets, eagerly scanning the faces of passers-by in the vain hope that she might meet him. She grew thin. She noticed this with surprise one morning when she fell through her corset. Even her stern father knew that something was eating her heart out and behind his wall of pride lurked a longing to comfort her.

There was an exhibition one week of the recent work of Flavia Flanigan at Thornton's studio. Valerie went because Miss Flanigan was an artist in the same line as herself. Personally Valerie had little use for Flavia because she regarded her as an unprincipled baggage, but she admitted that her rival could paint. Thus often is the skill of an angel imparted to the hand of a devil.

At the studio Valerie moved from canvas to canvas, discoursing praise in the way that artists have when speaking of one another's work.

Then her pulse stood still.

Before her was a panel representing "Spring." She was struck not alone by the novelty of the subject, although she could not recollect having seen it done

before, but chiefly by the figure which dominated the foreground. It was of a beautiful youth poised gracefully on one foot about to take a dose of sarsaparilla. The treatment was masterful, the flesh tints were beyond compare.

Then something familiar about the figure struck her. That ankle, that hip and shoulder, that *tout ensemble* could belong to no one but Henry.

A bitter cry escaped her. Not until it was recalled to her thus did she realize how overpowering was her regret. The idea of Henry posing for another artist filled her with futile frenzy. It must not be. She must save him. What if it were too late?

The thought maddened her. She rushed from the exhibition. Her one thought was to find Henry. Now that she had a clue it would be easy.

She took a taxi to Flavia Flanigan's studio. At the door of the building she told the chauffeur to wait and went up in the elevator to the top floor. A glass door bore Flavia Flanigan's name. Valerie paused a moment with her hand on the knob to still her beating heart.

Inside voices were raised in dispute. Valerie could not help listening.

"Please stay to tea," came in feminine tones.

"No," came the firm, masculine reply. "Miss Flanigan, I take your pay because I am a poor boy and I need it to buy stale bread, but when I am through posing my time is my own."

"You used to take tea with Valerie Van der Bock," the other argued.

"That was different."

"Why? Did you love her?"

There was no answer, though Valerie listened intently.

"So," sneered the woman's voice once more. "That's how the land lies. You scorn me because of her. Very well, if you don't care to drink my tea willingly there is another way."

"What?" came Henry's voice in alarm. "You wouldn't force me to drink it?"

"Yes."

A smothered cry of "Help" decided the watcher outside the door. She

shivered the glass with a blow from her silver purse and strode into the room.

Henry, flushed and panting, was struggling in the grip of Flavia Flanigan, who was slowly but surely forcing a teacup to his lips.

"Stop!" commanded Valerie.

At her words the villainess relaxed her grip on Henry and turned to face the invader. When she saw who it was towering over her she dropped her eyes hastily and then after a moment's pause she drank the tea herself.

"Thank heaven I was in time," said Valerie, and then turning to Henry she said simply, "Come home."

VI

THE Van der Bocks did not attend Valerie's and Henry's wedding. Their pointed absence hurt Valerie, but she did not let Henry know it. Afterwards Valerie brooded over the estrangement from the family. It is all very well to defy conventions, but the fact remains that conventions have an unhappy faculty of hitting back.

Then Henry's baby came. It was a girl and looked like Valerie, which relieved a faint, unworthy suspicion that had lurked in the wife's mind ever since she had found Henry posing for Flavia.

The day after it was born the proud

mother was pacing the floor of the apartment which they had occupied since their marriage when the maid announced, "Mr. Van der Bock."

Puzzled, Valerie said she was at home.

Her father came in. It was the first time they had met for nearly a year. Valerie noted that he had grown perceptibly older. There were lines under his eyes that his masseur had not been able to obliterate and there was more grey in his hair. But his attitude was still as unbending as ever. Pride held him straight and would not let him admit openly that his arms longed to clasp her to his bosom.

"May I see my granddaughter?" he asked formally.

"Certainly," Valerie agreed.

She led the way to an inner room. On the bed lay Henry, still pale and wan, but with a sweet smile on his face. In the crook of his arm was cuddled a tiny, swathed bundle.

The sight was too much for the reserve of Mr. Van der Bock. With tears starting from his eyes he moved to the bedside and put his arm around Henry's shoulders and drew him close.

"My son," he murmured softly. Then he reached out blindly with his other hand for Valerie.

She clasped his fingers in hers.



A MAN of self-respect is one who still believes that nobody suspects him.



IT is hard to believe that a man is telling the truth when you know that you would lie if you were in his place.



AFTER all, there is a way to hold a man's love: encourage him to boast about how marvelous it is.

THESE THINGS I LOVE

By Robert Carlton Brown

WISPS.

Sprigs of bitter sweet.
Strays.

Curling grape-vine tendrils.

Fragments.

Unfinished songs, lost in the singing.
Echoes from nothing.

The quiver of an eyelash.

A shattered fan.

The timorous curl of a sensitive
tip.

A single hair fluttering in the wind.

Dust from a moth's fat belly brushed
off by a bit of black velvet.

A broken butterfly wing.

Wraiths.

Trailing ends of smoke vanishing into
ether.

The breath of imagined perfumes.
Things found and thrown away, or
never found at all.

Bits of shimmering Roman glass.

A single line of a poem.

The whiskered frond of a fern.

Pictures wonderfully begun and
never finished.

A story without an end.

Fingers idly caressing piano keys in
search of more rhythm.

Wastrel airs.

A single dandelion seed ballooning
down the wind in search of a well-kept
lawn to violate.

A fuzzy fringe of mold on the rind of
a Camembert cheese.

These things I love.



FROM THE ROUMANIAN

THE shoe lost a nail, the horse lost a shoe, the general lost a horse, the king
lost a general, the country lost a king.

The Turk has four wives. Let us be merciful to the Turk.

There is one good wife in every town, and every man thinks he hasn't got her.

A bishop is no more than a priest who has climbed away from his fleas.

A flea has more sense than a man. It never jumps into a boiling pot.

The man with a handsome wife needs eyes in the back of his head.



WHEN a woman says she won't, it is a good sign that she will. And when
she says she will it is an even better sign.



A MAN may be a fool and not know it—but not if he is married.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

By Edwin Cole

BY the time Huntleigh had reached the ripe old age of twenty-nine he had discovered that a woman was only a woman after all, she was not the baffling, bewitching, superior creature with a touch of divinity that he had once believed her to be.

Her impulses were immature, her morals in reverse proportion to her courage and her reasoning processes almost *nil*. In fact, where once he was doubtful, now he was beginning to realize that man, after all, was lord of creation.

So when Eleanor Molineux returned from her finishing school, Huntleigh, who lived across the way, and had once carried her pick-a-back, accorded her that careless interest that an old dog has in a young kitten. Because, however, Eleanor had been away so long and had lost touch with the young men of her set, it developed on Huntleigh, as a friend and neighbor, to take her hither and thither, which he did good-naturedly.

One day it occurred to him that while these occasions were becoming less and less frequent because of Eleanor's growing popularity, they were becoming more and more enjoyable. Being of an analytical disposition and by profession a lawyer, he set about to divine the cause, arraying the pros against the cons in orderly fashion for that purpose. He must have a premise. It would be that love did not exist. It was a trick of nature for the unwary. It was a temporary delusion of mushroom growth which held the fort until the slower growing plant of affection took root or died a natural and uninteresting death.

So it was not love he had for Eleanor. Yet it was not the calm, constant, comfortable emotion of affection. He would not, of course, admit that it was mere physical attraction. No one does, it being the one thing of all others that one is least to blame for. God made women beautiful and men strong for a purpose.

In the slender, girlish elegance of her form, the set of her small head on the strong column of her throat, the tender yet proud lips and wonderful eyes of the girl there was reason enough and to spare why Huntleigh should take pleasure in her company, but to care for her for this reason was hardly decent.

However, there were other virtues he could admire even if they were ones of ignorance. Her girlish innocence was a cause for wonder, her faith in men disturbing, her enthusiasm for life infectious—for a less experienced person than Huntleigh. He felt a certain amount of responsibility for her, too. She had no brother, and, being a child of a late marriage, her parents were more like grandparents than father and mother. And if as a boy and she a child, he had carried her pick-a-back, so, as a boy, he had been fed dainties by her mother and made much of by her father. Was not that after all the secret of his pleasure in her company, the sense of protectorship? It seemed a satisfactory explanation and he accepted it and put it on file.

So he advised the girl from time to time of the wiles of men, careful always not to destroy her charming illusions; he descended on the logic, after all, of conventions, and even hinted at

his theories on the non-existence of the thing called love. And when, through a series, of what he considered admirably disguised lectures, he thought one day he had brought her to his way of thinking, she took his arm in a way she had, looked guilelessly up at him with eyes which were a danger to logic at all times, and called him an old fogey. And then, when she saw that she had hurt him, she made matters worse by putting both hands on his shoulders and looking penitently up at him.

"There, there, Old Watch Dog," she crooned, as tenderly as she would have to a child who had fallen and bumped its nose, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, but sometimes you talk like Solomon and Methuselah in one." Huntleigh caught wildly at his vanishing theories. It was not her words, but her near presence which had wrought the havoc.

Later he considered the incident more soberly. It was humiliating, it was more than that, for it left him in a chaotic state of mind. He tried to apply his philosophy and found it cold and unbendable. He told himself sternly that love did not exist and found himself wondering if when a girl showed the affection that this one had it was because she loved a man or because she didn't.

* In this mood Huntleigh saw but one chance of safety and that was in flight. That evening Eleanor asked him to escort her to a dance. He was sorry but he had an appointment with a client that he could not break. The girl looked at

him reproachfully. "Do you realize that this is the first time you have ever disappointed me?" she asked.

Huntleigh smiled, "Surely I may be forgiven with such a record," he had retorted.

"Very well," she had cautioned with a reproofing finger, "but never let it happen again. Remember that I have always first claim."

It was idiotic. It was against all precedent. The words seemed to slip off his tongue without his volition. "But I do not have the first claim on you," he found himself saying. The girl's eyes widened and then were lowered.

"I don't remember that you ever asked it," she answered.

Their eyes met.

Vainly Huntleigh struggled in that tightening mesh. All the knowledge of Ulysses was his but not his strength. Tenderly this modern Circe looked at him out of her great eyes. Perspiration stood out on his forehead. He felt himself going. The shame of it! Not because he admired her intellect—not because of her purity of character, but because she was physically beautiful beyond all comparison. No! a thousand times no! He would burn his bridges behind him now. He would tell the girl that she must look elsewhere for her companion after this.

"Eleanor," he began, "I—" The girl had bowed her head. Her long lashes lay against her rounded cheek in ravishing tracery. She leaned toward him expectant. "Eleanor, I—love you," he almost shouted.



A MAN always blames the woman who fools him. In the same way he blames the door he walks into in the dark.



IT is fortunate that a woman takes her husband's name when they marry. Otherwise they would often have nothing in common but their joint regret.



HIS AFFIANCED WIFE

By Caroline Stinson Burne

PINK DOOLITTLE sat gazing across the intervening wilderness of gleaming silver, crystal, tea-roses and yellow candle-shades at his affianced wife—of three years ago. She was Lovely Willoughby, and all that her nickname implies. Pink drew in his breath sharply as he looked. Some girls, like some drinks, have a momentary effect only. But Lovely had a kick like a coast defense gun, Pink unpoetically decided. One doesn't question Pink's judgment. The silhouette of Lovely and all her contours were perfect. And there was a something about her, warm, magnetic, in short, lovely. Her hair was a red-gold brown that broke into caressing wavelets. Her complexion was of the color of a ripe apricot, shading into creamy white in throat, bared shoulders and graceful arms. Her eyes were dark, with a slow lazy smile under the lids. She regarded Pink with a glance that mingled tenderness with mockery and a hint of recklessness.

"Pink, remember that last night at Fox Lake?" she rippled. Did he! And she could fling out a careless allusion to it like that! She could laugh lightly about the night that had killed his first illusions and touched a chilly finger to his young and trusting heart! Pink was bitterly astonished. Somehow he had pictured their meeting (after all these years) as quite different. In the picture, Lovely came on like the heroine of a melodrama, with chalky face and a black dress. And she was clutching at her heart with one hand, and in the other was a wad of damp wilted violets. Then she would sink sinuously to her knees, murmuring "Forgive me, Pink," or "Pink 'un, dear—" (for that was

what she had usually called him), and dissolve into tears. At which he, with manly tenderness, would raise her from her servile position and, of course, forgive her. That she had anything to forgive him, that certainly never entered his mind.

To be sure, this view of Lovely, originating in his imagination as it did, had very little in common with any of his recollections of her. He could bring back the picture of that awful night at Fox Lake without the slightest difficulty at any time of the day or night. First there was their absurd quarrel; then there was Lovely's getting "lost" with Wexham—he would never forget the anguish of those hours when he had searched the woods and scoured the lake in vain, with others from the camp), and then, along in the afternoon of the next day, there was Lovely's return! "We just got lost," she had coolly vouchsafed. Without further explanation, with a little smile and a shrug of her shoulders, she had turned and gone into the bungalow. Of course, she had related further details of her escapade with Wexham to him later. Lovely was possessed of a certain fine courage, he admitted. She had been perfectly fair—in a way. And he—Pink had to own that he had simply withdrawn from the game. That was all—there had never been any more to it. But now—

Well, Pink hoped that the entire evening was not going to be given over to post mortems. He turned resolutely to the blonde girl on his right and started a conversation that was as animated as a wooden toy from Nuremberg. She listened, her shallow, light blue eyes

supplying the byplay. Then she began a sprightly account of an automobile race she had attended in which the slaughter had been more than usually heavy. Pink clamped an expression of sportsmanlike interest on his face and tried to listen. But tantalizing bits of Lovely's daring sallies drifted across the table. Lovely's fluid, well-loved voice, with its cajoling overtones, kept trickling into his consciousness, even when he did not try to disentangle the words. He clenched his hands under the table, brought his jaws firmly together and tried to stifle the strange pain that kept wanting to burst his chest. He longed to give the table a mighty kick from underneath, scatter the food, the wine-glasses and all the decorations, and then grab Lovely and drag her out of the ruins.

When the men joined the women after what seemed an interminable time to Pink, he lounged gracefully and unhurriedly in the direction of Lovely. She stood as usual, surrounded by a wall of black and white. First and foremost there was Holden, young, good-looking and married, with whom rumor at present connected her name. Then there was a bald-headed millionaire, a popular actor, "Easy" Travers the polo player, and Wade, a boy just out of college.

"A sweet crew of fluffy asses!" Pink reflected.

Then he skilfully, adroitly, yet masterfully (as he thought) separated Lovely from the others and took her into the conservatory.

"Well, Pink 'un dear," she began "how is he? Want me to show you the night-blooming cereus?"

"I say, Lovely, how can you?" Pink gulped sentimentally. She laughed.

"Why, Pink, have you had too much to drink? You always *did*, you know!"

Pink glowered at her.

"I do remember that night at Fox Lake," he said sepulchrally. She looked at him with a faintly puzzled expression, then glanced uneasily toward the door.

"Lovely—haven't you any idea?

Lovely—I went through Hell. O, girl, girl—why did you do it?"

She threw her flexible contralto voice an octave lower and clasped her hands melodramatically to her breast.

"I was so young—I did not know—My Gawd—no one told me—no one warned me—I'm not a bad woman—don't be hard on me," she crooned, and then broke out into laughter.

"Don't!" cried Pink sharply. Her talent for burlesque did not appeal to his present mood.

"I won't, but it's your fault for starting the theatricals," she said with quick compunction and in her natural voice.

"You *were* young," agreed Pink.

"Granted," she replied. "It was all very unwise—very stupid and utterly foolish. But I decided then that I wouldn't give up the rest of my life to self-pity, sackcloth and ashes. I told you all about it first—and—we broke things off. You were perfectly decent about it, Pink. At least no one ever knew—from you—"

"I should have killed him. Even *that* was too good for him. He had no right to come between us. I should have murdered him!"

Lovely gave him a whimsical smile.

"You'll feel differently in the morning," she said. "Of course, Pink, I was sorry about *us*—for I did care a lot. But I knew—after what had happened—we couldn't keep on being engaged. Naturally! That's the way people think about such things— It had to be—that way."

"But I was something of a cad myself—I *was* a cad."

"Oh, I don't think so—exactly," Lovely told him, half comfortingly, half mournfully.

Pink struggled a moment with his thoughts. He usually found it easy enough to talk, and sometimes it was not especially painful to think. But to do both at once seemed to attempt the impossible. And he kept harking back to the girl with the wind-blown hair who had coolly shrugged her shoulders and told them all: "We just got lost."

"Lovely—" he began. "You know you *are* a dear. And I—O Lovely, I know more than I did then. I thought I *ought* to give you up, you know. Stand on my dignity and all that. Thought I owed it to myself. People would think I was a poor stick if I didn't. A man could slip up a dozen times—as often as he wanted—and still be a pillar of respectability after thirty. Just like changing your shirt, you know. But girls—I thought that was different. They were made of different clay to begin with. Either they were 'very, very good' or the opposite. Anyhow, only men had it in them to get up and go on, once anything bowled them over. Conceited ass I was! Wish I'd thrashed Wexham and married you the next week."

He sat with bowed head—his hands clasping and unclasping between his knees.

"It might—it might have been better," Lovely said finally in a low, emotionless voice. She looked down at her small, very high-heeled slipper covered with gleaming paillettes. Even the point of Lovely's slipper had a soft roundness of outline.

"And—ever since?" He prompted with difficulty.

"Oh, yes! Ever since! It's been one thing after another. All trying to follow in—in Wexham's footsteps, you know."

"God! And that's what I let you in for. It wasn't all *his* fault. I'm the one that turned his back—looked the other way—instead of holding out my hand to you. Fine friend I am! Great lover!"

"Never mind that now," Lovely essayed the nonchalant.

"Who're you going to marry?" he asked suddenly.

Lovely shrugged her satiny shoulders and smiled indolently.

"Don't let's mention such tiresome topics."

"Well, then—we could get a steamer

that sails tomorrow. Lovely, will you marry me?"

She smiled—a rainbow smile.

"Oh, no, Pink; not now! Oh, no; thank you, Pink!"

She backed away, sighing a little. She shook her head a bit sorrowfully at the man who had failed her once. Then she had stood eagerly on the very threshold of life. She could not do as he wanted her to do now. If he could give her up once—even for such a cause—could she trust his present mood? She had let him make the decision before. Now she would make it herself. Or rather, was it not already made for her?

For at that moment Holden came in on them. (Everything was happening after a logical pattern, she thought swiftly.)

"Ready, Babe?" he asked, and dangled a fur evening wrap.

Lovely rose to follow him.

"Good-bye, Pink," she whispered hurriedly. "I'm sorry I can't, you know. But we're going South on the *Mermaid* tonight. Sh!"

Holden was smoking a cigarette nervously with short, impatient puffs. Lovely glanced at him apprehensively, then smiled at Pink.

"You understand?" she whispered.

"God!" he said, and reached out for her. But she had slipped away.

He had the impression that it was a ghost that had smiled at him. He was never going to forget that smile. He sat staring at the palms and prickly things. But he did not see them at all.

"What was the matter with Doolittle?" Holden wanted to know. They were being whirled rapidly along in Holden's car. Holden's strong, thick arms were about her, pinning her down.

"Doolittle certainly looked funny," he continued, smiling in a complaisant, pleased-with-the-world manner. "I suppose he was a bit roaring."

"Oh, yes. A bit roaring. Perhaps," said Lovely.

MOTHERHOOD

By Robert Garland

HELEN was a Young Mother. Her Baby was a Cunning Little Thing, but very small. Helen's Mother sat beside her on the Bed and held her Hand. A Trained Nurse sat on a Chair at the other side of the Bed. Another Trained Nurse held the Baby. Two Physicians consulted in the Hall outside Helen's Door, wondering what chance the Cunning Little Thing had. The Young Father wept with emotion in the Second Story Front, his Head in his Hands. His Parents stood tragically beside him. Helen's Father paced the Floor nervously. The Drawing-room was filled to overflowing with Friends and Relatives who waited hys-

terically to hear the News. Telegrams and Flowers and Special Messengers arrived constantly. The Telephone did not cease to jangle. The Entire House was in an uproar, and the Cunning Little Thing howled at the top of its cunning little Lungs while Five Females endeavored to soothe it.

And down in the Cellar, behind the Furnace, the Old Grey Cat nursed six brand new healthy looking Kittens, and yawned with Boredom. Their Father was asleep in the Sunshine half a mile away. The Old Grey Cat, hearing all the fuss Upstairs, smiled, and when one Kitten mewed she biffed it with her Paw.



FROM A CAR-WINDOW

By Ruth Guthrie Harding

PINES, and a blur of lithe young grasses;
Gold in a pool, from the western glow;
Spread of wings where the last thrush passes—
And thoughts of you as the sun dips low.

Quiet lane, and an irised meadow . . .
(*How many summers have died since then?*) . . .
I wish you knew how the deep'ning shadow
Lies on the blue and green again!

Dusk, and the sweep of field and hollow
Etched in gray when a star appears:
Sunset, . . . twilight, . . . and dark to follow, . . .
And thoughts of you thro' a mist of tears.



WHEN you sympathize with a married woman you make two enemies—or gain one wife and one friend.



HAPPINESS is the china shop; love is the bull.

WHICH GIRL DO I LOVE?

By C. Hugh

I AM in a quandary. I am a plain business man, yet I believe I am in love with three women.

I kiss two of them and would kiss the third if I could gather the necessary courage to do so.

I am not a Lothario, not an idler of the clubs, not a flirt, but only a business man and am tremendously in earnest. I am not of a fickle nature but am in a very perturbed state of mind. I wish to heaven I could decide which one of the trio I love or if I love any of them!

I am puzzled—completely baffled—and can't properly state what constantly goes through my mind. At times I have been on the point of offering my hand, pocketbook and lifelong affection to each one of the three; but then—something always stopped me; I wasn't sure—and I didn't do it.

As yet, not a word of love has been spoken by myself or either of the three. I have entertained them and still am entertaining them, at the theater, at parties and at other such places. And the three, in turn, are entertaining me in their homes.

I kiss two of the trio when I meet them in their homes and when I depart. The third one—I don't, although at times she seems to be the *one girl* in the world for me. And then, again, I feel as if I weren't sure.

I am moody.

At times, Helen—tall, dark Helen, with her slender figure, topped by tangles of jet black hair—a pair of changeable brown eyes, and great long lashes, with the most piquant and adorable and kissable mouth, and a complexion like a professional beauty—seems the

only woman. And I am completely happy and contented when she makes the piano give forth a soft melody.

But then there is Ethel with her quiet, mouse-like manners. She interests me with her babble of small talk and her changeable moods. But she is the one I don't kiss!

Cora, the third one, is a darling! Her sort o' sunburned face and her wonderful hair! She is the most companionable woman I have ever met. I would have married her long ago—if she would have had me—but for Ethel and Helen.

* * *

I have done nothing dishonorable, yet I feel like a cad! I say I have never broached the subject of love or marriage to any one of the three, yet I have kissed two of them and they have kissed me in return. Helen, Cora and Ethel are not, decidedly not, of the trifling, the flirtatious kind. Each is the only daughter of parents in very comfortable circumstances and each has numerous other admirers besides myself.

But, for some reason or other, I appear to have the inside track in each of the homes.

I am unable to decide whether I love any one of the three. I have thought of dropping out of sight for a time and of letting things take their course. And I may yet be forced to take this step as this uncertainty is changing me into an irritable bachelor and is interrupting my business.

I am twenty-eight and hold a responsible position in a large publishing house. My income is sufficient for the needs of a household, should I choose to

marry, so that it is not lack of funds which deters me. Only the uncertainty of the affection I hold for any one of the trio keeps me in the state of bachelorthood.

I have known Cora for years. In fact, we grew up together. She was visiting an aunt in Smethport, the little town in which I lived, and I first saw her on the tennis court. Her slashing playing and her tanned features first attracted my attention. I soon learned that she could play tennis better than most of the boys of her age, and after I had made her acquaintance, we played many times together, and it wasn't long until we had gained the reputation of being the best tennis team in the town.

For two or three years she was my only "girl." I was the most disconsolate fellow at the preparatory school to which my parents sent me when I was forced to leave home—and Cora. She returned to her home in the city but she generally managed to get down to the school for our big football games and to a few of the fraternity dances. And she always spent the summer with the aunt in Smethport and I saw much of her then.

Our love for sports kept us much together through our preparatory and college careers. We became very devoted—in an outdoor manner. Much of the summer we spent in each other's company in Smethport, while in the winter our letters from school were filled with the doings of our teams. She played on her Varsity hockey and basket-ball teams, while I "made" the football, basket-ball and track teams of my college.

When she broke her ankle playing hockey, she telegraphed me and I hurried to her side in the hospital. And when I got water on the knee in the last football game of my college career, they carried me to her home, as it was nearer than my own, and there it was that my own parents came to see me.

While I lay in her house for weeks and weeks, unable to move, Cora cared for me as if I had been her own brother. I had tried to bluff them into

sending me to a hospital when they pulled me from under the pile at the game, but she had hurried from her seat in the stand and had ordered the chauffeur to drive me to her home. And it was there they kept me.

She afterwards told me that she had had to swallow hard to keep from fainting as they picked me up from the field, but that was the only time I ever knew of her showing the white feather.

When I left her home on my cane to resume my studies at college and to be graduated in the spring, I kissed her as she stood in the doorway. It was our first kiss but she promptly kissed me in return, simply and without a word of love. And I kiss her every time I visit her now.

She knows of Helen and Ethel. She sees me with them, as I have not tried to keep my fondness for the others a secret. Cora has other admirers who shower flowers upon her and take her to parties, but, nevertheless, we always come back to each other before any great length of time.

She makes one feel so comfortable. I can talk to her just as I would to a man—about sports, the outdoor world, and business—and can be sure she will understand. And she can slip from a soft, downy thing of silk and pumps into a sturdy tramping suit and a sweater and in a few moments be off with me for a tramp through the fields and woods. And that evening she will be the sweetest, fluffiest little thing at the party.

She is small—the smallest of the three. Her head comes but to my chin. (I am close to six feet tall.) Her hair is brown, her eyes soft gray and her cheeks are tanned by the wind from the wild rides in her little roadster or on the back of her horse. And she likes to live in the country. Her father owns a delightful place in Virginia, whither the family meanders every summer to live the simple life. And occasionally I visit them—and her.

We play all day long, during these visits, and we stroll through the moon-

light of the soft Virginia evenings; and she allows me to hold her hand and to kiss her when we say good night. And I love her—then.

But to spoil the happy Eden, the faces and forms of Ethel and Helen usually come to me before I drop off to sleep and my dreams are disturbed by my dilemma.

* * *

Absolute comfort, satisfaction with myself, with her, with the world—with everybody—is my sensation when I am with Helen. She satisfies me completely while I am with her. I know no wants nor have ambitions except in a vague sort of a way.

I idle long and furiously—if one may be said to idle furiously—while with her. My ambitions which I have built up through long years are overthrown and I can see nothing but her—*her*.

But when I am away from her, I straightway become dissatisfied with conditions and I am certain that I shall not see her again.

And yet, I do see her. Her personality continually calls to me so that I go, and go, and continue to go to her home where I lose all interest in business and think of nothing but pleasure.

But I *must* think of business. My work continues to grow more exacting so that it needs almost continual attention. I can not call my time my own for weeks at a stretch. I am passing through a strenuous period of work and more work. And yet, I go to see Helen and for a time I lose all interest in my business and think only of the present and of the enjoyable things of life.

This fact bothered me for a time after my first visits to her, but as the visits increased, my conscience and desire to combat the web of her personality which she wove about me grew less and less strong until I gave myself entirely up to her and her pleasures.

She is tall, dark and beautiful—the most beautiful of the three. Her brown eyes glisten at night like stars and in the light are liquid, compelling. Her mouth is a perfect Cupid's bow, nat-

ural and unaffected. Her hair, raven black, is abundant. Her figure, willowy and slender. She was born to attract men.

To complete her equipment is added an innocent and carefree laugh and a passion for music.

She is a musician of considerable skill. Her ability to make the piano respond to her moods seems, at times, to include that of men, and she can play upon the feelings of her many admirers in much the same manner. And she has many admirers. Proposals of marriage galore have been showered upon her, yet she has laughingly shaken them off and yet kept the men as friends.

But she likes—perhaps more than that—loves me. Of that I am sure. Yet I have said nothing of love. But still, I kiss her.

Her hold on me is not so absolute as it was at one time. Just before the crisis in my business was reached, she left town on a visit to a girl friend and I was able to devote my entire attention to my neglected affairs. Before she had returned, I had resolved to hold onto my ambitions and thus far I have been able to do so to a certain extent. But I continue to visit her and the old feeling of complete carefree comfort, rest, satisfaction with myself and the world, and of joy comes to me when I am with her.

Her wishes dominate me, even yet, when I am with her. Her desires are my desires, but she is no spur to my ambition, and I am one of the sort of men who continually needs a spur to keep going toward the goal. One of the sort who works as if his life depended upon it during some moods, while he idles and loafes at others.

But her companionship is not a spur to my ambitions.

I first kissed her during one of my periods of moodiness in which I could see little but struggle for years to come. Things seemed to go wrong and I went to her to forget them.

During the evening she drew from me the story of my troubles, and asked me to forget them. Not a word of en-

couragement, not a hope for the future, but the admonition to forget the troubles.

And then she kissed me! And straightway I forgot all my troubles and kissed her in return.

Her kisses are mine, now, when I ask them. Yet I have said nothing of love.

Her ability to make me forget business, friends and everything of my life not connected with Helen, causes me to wonder if she is the right woman for me. I believe that I could even feel happy living with her in a four-room apartment on a mere pittance. But I doubt that she would be happy under such conditions.

We both crave the comforts of life, and in order to provide such comforts I must work hard for years and perhaps much of my future life. Yet I feel neither ambitious nor dissatisfied with conditions while with Helen, and I am fearful that such would always be the case should we be married. I fear I would settle down to as comfortable an existence as my income would allow—and would remain there for the rest of my days.

And yet, had my ambitions not been uppermost in my mind long years before I met Helen, I am sure I would have succumbed to her charms and have added my name to the list of her other admirers—and proposed. I am not at all certain but what I shall do it yet. An existence with Helen in only a small corner of the world might be pleasant after all.

As such a thought comes to me, the strange, quiet little smile, and the calm, dark eyes of Ethel come to my mind. And her soft, little fingers find a way of wrapping themselves about my thoughts so that I am more than ever uncertain as to which of the three was made for me. And I feel more than ever like a fool for being unable to come to a conclusion or make a decision.

* * *

Ethel has held an attraction for me ever since the first time I spoke to her

one rainy day as she hurried from a trolley car without an umbrella. As I knew she lived in my neighborhood, I offered to share my umbrella with her and she permitted me to walk with her to her home. I found her conversation a delight. Her small talk left no embarrassing silence during the stroll homeward through the rain, that first time we met.

That first chat discovered for us that we had many acquaintances in common so that it was not long until I had been presented to her in the conventional manner at the Lawrence Club Ball. Before the evening was over, I felt the attraction which holds me to this day.

Her dancing that first evening of our real acquaintanceship had more of the joyousness which springs from the real love of living than that of any of the girls of our set. And I was happy when her quaint smile, which seemed so near to tears that it puzzled me at first and always attracted me, would rest upon me.

We soon became good friends. I grew to know her little likes and dislikes and she learned my favorite dishes and always included them when entertaining at her home. It is her delight to surprise me with a new concoction of her own designing.

She makes delicious pastries—it is her hobby—and on the week end she routs the maids from the kitchen and prepares a supply of goodies that is always displayed on the occasion of my next visit.

Her tastes in things artistic are so much like mine that there never has been the slightest argument regarding the selection of any portion of her costume or of anything of that nature. Nor have there ever been any of the petty fusses which have often interrupted the smooth going of my friendship with Helen and Cora.

It wasn't long after meeting her that I was accepted at Ethel's home as one of the inner circle. Her brothers treated me as one of themselves and as they are of my own age, I frequently am invited to their affairs. And it is

the custom of the brothers to ask me home with them for the remainder of the night; and always Ethel is waiting up for us with a cup of coffee and a sandwich or a steaming hot cup of bouillon.

Her unconscious goodness is not confined to the home. She is popular among a large part of our set and she is frequently invited to functions which I attend. Occasionally we go together. But it never has become such that Ethel expects me to take her. We are perfectly free with one another. She has many other admirers who are glad to escort her to places from which my business keeps me. Yet I always feel as if I am certain of her companionship on occasions when I can be present.

She knows little of athletics but is an expert with a horse and we frequently take long canters through the autumn-colored lanes and country roads. I had lived for several years on a western cattle ranch and had come to love the feel of a saddle, and these rides have brought us closer together than it is likely we otherwise would have been brought in the natural course of events. She has the same appreciation of scenery and natural beauty as I and at times we ride for miles in silence except for an occasional word to our mounts.

She is one of the few women I have known who can listen as well as talk. But at times, her conversation sparkles with originality and is good to hear.

Her quiet, and at times, wistful manners put one entirely at his ease and one is always certain of securing sympathy from her in regard to any matter of a business or personal nature.

She loves children, just as I do, and is very much friends with all the little boys and girls of her neighborhood.

She has always created in me a desire to please her—something the other women do not. I am never pleased with the little attentions such as I pay to the other girls of my acquaintance, but must do something greater for Ethel—I must send her more and nicer flowers or larger boxes of candy or more gloves or take her to dine at more expensive restaurants and do other little hard-to-explain acts which show what feelings she arouses in me.

Ethel's sense of observation is as keen as that of an experienced newspaper reporter and one of her chief charms is her ability to mimic or to describe people she has met. At such times the naïve manner in which she expresses herself makes her adorable and many times I have come near to gathering her into my arms and kissing her wistful mouth.

But something has held me back. It may not, after all, be want of courage which does it, but the fact that she would expect an explanation for my action. This has made me keep my desires and feelings unexpressed. I would be unable to tell her that I loved only her so long as I am attracted by the other two girls. Until I can tell her of a love for her alone, without a struggle with my conscience—until then, I will remain silent.

But my soul is in a turmoil. I feel distressed and unstable. At times, even during my busiest mornings at the office, I find myself dreaming of one of the three. And then a blush will steal over my face as I think of the two other delightful girls.

* * *

Whether or not I am in love, I cannot decide. I am only a business man—a plain business man—and what does a business man know of love?



EVER since the new dances were invented the Recording Angel has been using shorthand.



QUIÉN SABE?

By Ruth Comfort Mitchell

IN Córdoba within the drowsing Plaza,
 Beyond the sleepy, sun-drenched market-place,
 Vacant and bare, denuded of its statue,
 There stands a scarred and mournful marble base.
The hours are tinkled from the old Cathedral,
 Gray-grim against the brilliance of the sky,
 And swooping downward in their clumsy circles
 The ugly, dun-winged buzzards slowly fly.

They light and struggle fiercely for a foothold;
 Their quarrels, shrill, discordant, pierce the air;
The sluggish stream of life within the city
 Flows ever onward, calmly unaware.
You ask in vain whose statue used to stand there,—
 A sun-drunk *peón*, dozing out his *gay*,
A grave eyed priest, a woman with *tortillas*,—
 The same regretful, velvet “*Yo no sé!*”

There was a scene here, once, to fit the setting,
 If we could pierce the shrouding of the years;
There was a day for reverent unveiling . . .
 And swelling hearts, and brimming eyes, and cheers . . .
What patriot, red-blooded, gave it reason?
 What martyr marked it with his placid smile?
Who set the pulses leaping for a season,
 And held the lime-light for a little while?

Who does believe his laurel is immortal?
 Who thinks the marble proof against the years?—
Or dreams the memory of his deed will linger
 When still the hearts, and dried away the tears?
A fluttered flag, a sudden blare of trumpet,
 A path of flowers, a little burst of song . . .
Then withering and fading, and the silence;
 Time dims all lustre, and the years are long . . .

And now within the hushed and drowsing Plaza,
 Beyond the sleepy, sun-drenched market-place,
Stained with the years, and weathered with the seasons,
 There stands a scarred and mournful marble base.
Unheeding round its story flows forever
 The lazy current of the dozing town,
And on it, hurtling in their clumsy circles,
 The ugly, dun-winged buzzards settle down.

THE BOARDING-HOUSE

By James Joyce

MRS. MOONEY was a butcher's daughter. She was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She had married her father's foreman and opened a butcher's shop near Spring Gardens. But as soon as his father-in-law was dead Mr. Mooney began to go to the devil. He drank, plundered the till, ran headlong into debt. It was no use making him take the pledge: he was sure to break out again a few days after. By fighting his wife in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his business. One night he went for his wife with the cleaver and she had to sleep in a neighbor's house.

After that they lived apart. She went to the priest and got a separation from him with care of the children. She would give him neither money nor food nor house-room; and so he was obliged to enlist himself as a sheriff's man. He was a shabby, stooped little drunkard with a white face and a white moustache and white eyebrows, pencilled above his little eyes, which were pink-veined and raw; and all day long he sat in the bailiff's room, waiting to be put on a job. Mrs. Mooney, who had taken what remained of her money out of the butcher business and set up a boarding-house in Hardwicke Street, was a big, imposing woman. Her house had a floating population made up of tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man and, occasionally, *artistes* from the music halls. Its resident population was made up of clerks from the city. She governed the house cunningly and firmly, knew when to give credit, when to be stern and when to let things pass.

All the resident young men spoke of her as *The Madam*.

Mrs. Mooney's young men paid fifteen shillings a week for board and lodgings (beer or stout at dinner excluded). They shared in common tastes and occupations and for this reason they were very chummy with one another. They discussed with one another the chances of favorites and outsiders. Jack Mooney, the Madam's son, who was clerk to a commission agent in Fleet Street, had the reputation of being a hard case. He was fond of using soldiers' obscenities: usually he came home in the small hours. When he met his friends he had always a good one to tell them and he was always sure to be onto a good thing—that is to say, a likely horse or a likely *artiste*. He was also handy with the mitts and sang comic songs. On Sunday nights there would often be a reunion in Mrs. Mooney's front drawing-room. The music-hall *artistes* would oblige; and Sheridan played waltzes and polkas and vamped accompaniments. Polly Mooney, the Madam's daughter, would also sing. She sang:

"I'm a . . . naughty girl.
You needn't sham:
You know I am."

Polly was a slim girl of nineteen; she had light, soft hair and a small, full mouth. Her eyes, which were gray with a shade of green through them, had a habit of glancing upwards when she spoke with anyone, which made her look like a little perverse Madonna. Mrs. Mooney had first sent her daughter to be a typist in a corn-factor's office

but, as a disreputable sheriff's man used to come every other day to the office, asking to be allowed to say a word to his daughter, she had taken her daughter home again and set her to do house-work. As Polly was very lively the intention was to give her the run of the young men. Besides, young men like to feel that there is a young woman not very far away. Polly, of course, flirted with the young men, but Mrs. Mooney, who was a shrewd judge, knew that the young men were only passing the time away: none of them meant business. Things went on so for a long time and Mrs. Mooney began to think of sending Polly back to typewriting, when she noticed that something was going on between Polly and one of the young men. She watched the pair and kept her own counsel.

Polly knew that she was being watched, but still her mother's persistent silence could not be misunderstood. There had been no open complicity between mother and daughter, no open understanding but, though people in the house began to talk of the affair, still Mrs. Mooney did not intervene. Polly began to grow a little strange in her manner and the young man was evidently perturbed. At last, when she judged it to be the right moment, Mrs. Mooney intervened. She dealt with moral problems as a clever deals with meats, and in this case she had made up her mind.

It was a bright Sunday morning of early summer, promising heat, but with a fresh breeze blowing. All the windows of the boarding-house were open and the lace curtains ballooned gently towards the street beneath the raised sashes. The belfry of George's Church sent out constant peals and worshippers, singly or in groups, traversed the little circus before the church, revealing their purpose by their self-contained demeanor no less than by the little volumes in their gloved hands. Breakfast was over in the boarding-house and the table of the breakfast-room was covered with plates on which lay yellow streaks of eggs with morsels of bacon-

fat and bacon-rind. Mrs. Mooney sat in the straw armchair and watched the servant, Mary, remove the breakfast things. She made Mary collect the crusts and pieces of broken bread to help to make Tuesday's bread-pudding. When the table was cleared, the broken bread collected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and key, she began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the night before with Polly. Things were as she had suspected: she had been frank in her questions and Polly had been frank in her answers. Both had been somewhat awkward, of course. She had been made awkward by her not wishing to receive the news in too cavalier a fashion or to seem to have connived, and Polly had been made awkward not merely because allusions of that kind always made her awkward but also because she did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother's tolerance.

Mrs. Mooney glanced instinctively at the little gilt clock on the mantelpiece as soon as she had become aware through her reverie that the bells of George's Church had stopped ringing. It was seventeen minutes past eleven: she would have lots of time to have the matter out with Mr. Doran and then catch short twelve at Marlborough Street. She was sure she would win. To begin with she had all the weight of social opinion on her side: she was an outraged mother. She had allowed him to live beneath her roof, assuming that he was a man of honor, and he had simply abused her hospitality. He was thirty-four or thirty-five years of age, so that youth could not be pleaded as his excuse; nor could ignorance be his excuse since he was a man who had seen something of the world. He had simply taken advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience: that was evident. The question was: What reparation would he make?

There must be reparation made in such case. It is all very well for the man: he can go his ways as if nothing had happened, having had his moment

of pleasure, but the girl has to bear the brunt. Some mothers would be content to patch up such an affair for a sum of money; she had known cases of it. But she would not do so. For her only one reparation could make up for the loss of her daughter's honor: marriage.

She counted all her cards again before sending Mary up to Mr. Doran's room to say that she wished to speak with him. She felt sure she would win. He was a serious young man, not rakish or loud-voiced like the others. If it had been Mr. Sheridan or Mr. Meade or Bantam Lyons her task would have been much harder. She did not think he would face publicity. All the lodgers in the house knew something of the affair; details had been invented by some. Besides, he had been employed for thirteen years in a great Catholic wine-merchant's office and publicity would mean for him, perhaps, the loss of his job. Whereas if he agreed all might be well. She knew he had a good screw for one thing and she suspected he had a bit of stuff put by.

Nearly the half hour! She stood up and surveyed herself in the pier-glass. The decisive expression of her great florid face satisfied her and she thought of some mothers she knew who could not get their daughters off their hands.

Mr. Doran was very anxious indeed this Sunday morning. He had made two attempts to shave, but his hand had been so unsteady that he had been obliged to desist. Three days' reddish beard fringed his jaws and every two or three minutes a mist gathered on his glasses so that he had to take them off and polish them with his pocket handkerchief. The recollection of his confession of the night before was a cause of acute pain to him; the priest had drawn out every ridiculous detail of the affair and in the end had so magnified his sin that he was almost thankful at being afforded a loophole of reparation. The harm was done. What could he do now but marry her or run away? He could not brazen it out. The affair would be sure to be talked of and his employer would be certain to hear of

it. Dublin is such a small city: everyone knows everyone else's business. He felt his heart leap warmly in his throat as he heard in his excited imagination old Mr. Leonard calling out in his rasping voice: "Send Mr. Doran here, please."

All his long years of service gone for nothing! All his industry and diligence thrown away! As a young man he had sown his wild oats, of course; he had boasted of his free-thinking and denied the existence of God to his companions in public houses. But that was all passed and done with . . . nearly. He still bought a copy of *Reynolds's Newspaper* every week, but he attended to his religious duties and for nine-tenths of the year lived a regular life. He had money enough to settle down on; it was not that. But the family would look down on her. First of all there was her disreputable father, and then her mother's boarding-house was beginning to get a certain fame. He had a notion that he was being had. He could imagine his friends talking of the affair and laughing. She was a little vulgar; sometimes she said "I seen" and "If I had've known." But what would grammar matter if he really loved her? He could not make up his mind whether to like her or despise her for what she had done. Of course, he had done it, too. His instinct urged him to remain free, not to marry. Once you are married you are done for, it said.

While he was sitting helplessly on the side of the bed in shirt and trousers she tapped lightly at his door and entered. She told him all, that she had made a clean breast of it to her mother and that her mother would speak with him that morning. She cried and threw her arms round his neck, saying:

"Oh, Bob! Bob! What am I to do? What am I to do at all?"

She would put an end to herself, she said.

He comforted her feebly, telling her not to cry, that it would be all right, never fear. He felt against his shirt the agitation of her bosom.

It was not altogether his fault that it had happened. He remembered well, with the curious patient memory of the celibate, the first casual caresses, her dress, her breath, her fingers had given him. Then late one night as he was undressing for bed she had tapped at his door, timidly. She wanted to relight her candle at his for hers had been blown out by a gust. It was her bath night. She wore a loose, open combing-jacket of printed flannel. Her white instep shone in the opening of her furry slippers and the blood glowed warmly behind her perfumed skin. From her hands and wrists, too, as she lit and steadied her candle, a faint perfume arose.

On nights when he came in very late it was she who warmed up his dinner. He scarcely knew what he was eating, feeling her beside him alone, at night, in the sleeping house. And her thoughtfulness! If the night was anyway cold or wet or windy there was sure to be a little tumbler of punch ready for him. Perhaps they could be happy together . . .

They used to go upstairs together on tiptoe, each with a candle, and on the third landing exchange reluctant good nights. They used to kiss. He remembered well her eyes, the touch of her hand and his delirium. . . .

But delirium passes. He echoed her phrase, applying it to himself: "*What am I to do?*" The instinct of the celibate warned him to hold back. But the sin was there; even his sense of honor told him that reparation must be made for such a sin.

While he was sitting with her on the side of the bed Mary came to the door and said that the missus wanted to see him in the parlor. He stood up to put on his coat and waistcoat, more helpless than ever. When he was dressed he went over to her to comfort her. It would be all right, never fear. He left her crying on the bed and moaning softly: "*O my God!*"

Going down the stairs his glasses became so dimmed with moisture that he had to take them off and polish them.

He longed to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where he would never hear again of his trouble, and yet a force pushed him downstairs step by step. The implacable faces of his employer and of the Madam stared upon his discomfiture. On the last flight of stairs he passed Jack Mooney, who was coming up from the pantry nursing two bottles of *Bass*. They saluted coldly; and the lover's eyes rested for a second or two on a thick bulldog face and a pair of thick, short arms. When he reached the foot of the staircase he glanced up and saw Jack regarding him from the door of the return-room.

Suddenly he remembered the night when one of the music-hall *artistes*, a little blonde Londoner, had made a rather free allusion to Polly. The reunion had been almost broken up on account of Jack's violence. Everyone tried to quiet him. The music-hall *artiste*, a little paler than usual, kept smiling and saying that there was no harm meant: but Jack kept shouting at him that if any fellow tried that sort of a game on with his sister he'd bloody well put his teeth down his throat, so he would.

Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. Then she dried her eyes and went over to the looking-glass. She dipped the end of the towel in the water-jug and refreshed her eyes with the cool water. She looked at herself in profile and readjusted a hairpin above her ear. Then she went back to the bed again and sat at the foot. She regarded the pillows for a long time and the sight of them awakened in her mind secret amiable memories. She rested the nape of her neck against the cool iron bed-rail and fell into a reverie. There was no longer any perturbation visible on her face.

She waited on patiently, almost cheerfully, without alarm, her memories gradually giving place to hopes and visions of the future. Her hopes and visions were so intricate that she no longer saw the white pillows

on which her gaze was fixed or remembered that she was waiting for anything.

At last she heard her mother calling. She started to her feet and ran to the banisters.

"Polly! Polly!"

"Yes, mamma?"

"Come down, dear. Mr. Doran wants to speak to you."

Then she remembered what she had been waiting for.



THE APPROACH

By Robert Garland

TWILIGHT crept stealthily, with infinite furtiveness, across the water. Dusk absorbed the long, low shore. A silver haze, diaphanous as a veil, drifted above the evening sea. The air was hung with stillness, with a vast silence you could almost hear. The early stars were tangled in the rigging of our ship like sea-nettles in a fishing net. The smell of land was in the air, subtly poignant. As the throb, throb, throb of the engines drove us nearer home, a luminosity, faint and incredible, appeared beyond our bow; it was as if the misty veil had been touched with phosphorus. As we approached, this luminosity became a glow, a glow that brightened steadily, increasing with each beat of the vessel's heart. Tiny sparks of light emerged, as if the younger planets had wandered from the sky. And then, with the abruptness of a miracle, the curtain of evening was powdered with a million stars. As we carved our way through the tranquil sea, these stars grew rapidly under our unbelieving eyes; they grew and multiplied endlessly, until, at length, a magic city, afloat upon the sea, was born. And it came upon us that these stars were the lights thereof. Enormous buildings, each a city unto itself, towered toward the sky, hung with lights. Pinnacles, wrapped

in mist, pierced the aureola that shimmered above the city that could be nothing but the madness of a dream. Towers rose, one above the other. To the left, a single shaft of white shot upward, crowned with a coronet of lambent flame. Colossal buildings, breath-taking, broddingnagian, crowned one another, each resplendent with unnumbered lights. As we crept northward, these preposterous temples shifted slowly. The nearer ones were distinct and very real, doubled by their reflected selves. The farther ones were soft, mysterious. The farthest were painted on the background of the night. It was mad, unbelievable! It was impossible! But there it was, as true as the impossible alone can be. It was the spirit of the New World made manifest. It was magnificent with a brutal magnificence, and, at the same time, it was appealing and queerly tender as are all brutal, and therefore childish, things. It was young, unfeeling, egotistical, believing in itself above all other gods. It was part and parcel of the age that had reared it. . . .

Our ship swung shoreward. With a strange gentleness, she crept into the arms of this dream city; enormous arms, strong and masterful, stretched out, anxious to receive her.



DEATH

By Richard Florance

THREE once was a man who was always unfortunate,
Things always happened to him, but none of them lucky.
At last he was caught underground in a cave-in:
Ten feet of rock above him and under him,
Hemming him into a small, dark hole.
He had a minute or two to live—
A minute to breathe,
A minute to think,
Cramped and crushed—
And then death.
Death, the great mystery, close to him now—
He could feel himself dying in the dark.
He thought he'd be brave,
And face death smiling—
That at last he'd discover
Just what it is—
As he died, what would happen?
He died.
He was always unfortunate.
Nothing happened.



ON one issue, at least, men and women agree: they both distrust women.



CHEER up, cynics! In point of fact, very few men are as bad as their wives think they are.



THE firmest friendships are between those who have suffered together. This explains why divorce is so far short of unanimous.



A WOMAN may forgive the man who forgets to feed her, but she never forgives the man who forgets to kiss her.

"THE PLAY'S THE THING"

A DRAMATIC NIGHTMARE

By Ferdinand Reyher

A STAGE in semi-chaos. A man kneeling before a fireplace at right making some wire attachments. JOHN DIETRICH, a dramatist, enters with a bunch of MSS. in his hand. He slams the door after him.

VOICE

Look out there, Dietrich. You'll bring the scenes down.

DIETRICH

I don't give a hang if I do. (He sinks exhausted in a chair.) Hey there, Staney, yell through the fireplace at Debs—my voice is gone. Ask him what kind of a manager he thinks he is. Here's not even the right side in yet. Ten rehearsals and the lines not known! Go some place and get me a glass of whiskey, and some lunch, and set it on the table out there and tell me when you've got it.

(He struggles with himself to keep his eyes open. Yawns, and stretches. Yawns, blinks, dozes. It becomes darker until the room is lighted only by the red glow from the fireplace.

There is a rumbling and grating; a tinkling of innumerable bells, very soft and continuous; a low rapid-fire clicking as of a dozen muffled typewriters; a distant banging of doors; and a hushed, confused babble of voices.)

A SMALL VOICE

Dietrich, John Dietrich!

DIETRICH (starting)

Who's that? Where are you?

A SMALL VOICE

Here, John, in the fireplace. I am the fireplace. You're sitting before me according to directions—left front. This one had to drag me in also, to get an effective first scene: other lights out, soft red glow and all that sort of thing, you know. I want to ask you, John, for heaven's sake, don't you drag me into a play again, and line me with red incandescents and stuff torn blank paper into me while somebody flashes a pocket electric behind. Please don't, John.

SOMETHING

Ding-a-ling! a-ling! Ding-a-ling!

DIETRICH

What's that ringing?

SOMETHING

It's me, John, the telephone: first aid to the exposition and immediate relief to the dénouement. The fellow that wrote this didn't put me in but I'm here all the same—in your subconscious, dear, pains-hating self, John!—waiting to be used; standing sinister and brooding on a side table or on a littered desk, waiting to come into my own. But, John, I'm sick of it all—the short circuits, the baby talk, the stock quotations, death calls and the rest of the stuff. Give me a rest: the audience is wise to me.

CHORUS OF LITTLE VOICES

Twee! Twee! Twee!

DIETRICH

What are you?

CHORUS OF LITTLE VOICES

We're tricks; we're small but ancient and honorable tricks, and there's not a bit of originality in us. We're a handkerchief dropped; we're bags and fans left behind; we're rapiers exchanged in the fifth act death-scuffle by expert duelists; we're the click of the fake elevator in a Belasco setting; we're the hoary and unoriginal and convenient labor-saving devices!

(Low moans and groans; a dim, distant wailing, like a drizzle of tears.)

DIETRICH

Heavens! What's that?

MOANS

Oh, John, John! it's me, the Granville Barker scenery! I'm getting the willies at myself, John—throw some light on me, please.

(The right side of the room begins to lighten.)

DIETRICH

But we can't throw light on you: you're inexpensive stuff; you're madras screens and rags and cotton curtains; who wants to look at you in the open?

GRANVILLE BARKER SCENERY

I don't care—I'm scared at myself; I'm trembling in the sights of spookdom, and I've got the quavers. Better a rag in the sunshine than a Gobelin tapestry in the dark.

(The right side of the room stands revealed à la Granville B., negligée.

There comes a shuffling, clinking, clicking, rattling.)

A RASPING VOICE

Death! Vengeance! and Scheherazade!

DIETRICH (*proudly*)

Oh, I know you: you're the Russian scenery.

RUSSIAN SCENERY

I am the Russian scenery. I'm a riot! I'm a prismatic intoxication! I'm a mechanical spree! I'm only colors but I've got an inner feeling like geometrical clockworks. (*Pensively.*) I guess it's temperament. (*Modestly.*) Put some drapery round me.

(The back of the stage has lighted into a bleeding mass of raw and linear coloring.)

VOICE FROM THE LEFT (*sneering*)

Now you see, Dietrich, what this new craze leads to. Permit me—I'm the sturdy old-fashioned Belasco arrangement on the left: fireplace, mantel, chairs you can sit on, window with real glass, door with genuine knob, and so on. Comfort, accuracy and utility in the dramatic home is my motto. If the play's no good it's the duty of the producer to spread suggestions for effective private decoration, and teach the audience what a Childs' restaurant or a Mexican hacienda looks like. The setting's the thing I sing, and if you're going to put on a king fit him up like a king!

GRANVILLE BARKER SCENERY (*poetically indignant*)

O thou cheap realist! How vulgar! How crass! How Philistine! 'Tis ugly; 'tis expensive; 'tis really unreal for the real is a reel of realization and who could realize in front of reality?

BELASCO SCENERY (*cautiously*)
Was that a question?RUSSIAN SCENERY (*hissing*)

Brrrr! you unsoulful, cantankerous mass of regularity! Hey, there, Gran, old boy, I'm with you here, even if you haven't gone far enough: not till scenery is able to suggest the condition of a character's liver at the instant of the crisis will the drama be saved!

BELASCO SCENERY
Gee, Dietrich, that's a jolly nice fel-

low over there now; so comfortable, too.

(DIETRICH stirs uneasily, and seems about to wake; but he leans back into the chair again. The room became lighter as he stirred and now grows gradually darker as he falls back into his doze.)

Two voices begin talking right, in the little corner where the scenery connects with the edge of the stage. They speak very low, but with the deadly distinctness of the prompter's voice in an awful pause.)

STAGE MANAGER

That goes real pretty now—following the changes in the soundness of his sleep with changes of light. Good idea; didn't think of it at first.

ELECTRICIAN

I tell you, the most important person in the modern drama is the electrician. Give me a good lighting system and plenty of opportunity, and I'll make anything go.

STAGE MANAGER

Sh! He's stirring again. Hey, prompter—Morgan! come here—follow this careful now. They're a little shy on this part that's coming now, and just hold yourself ready to throw the cues into 'em.

(From the back of the room comes a line of pale, indistinctly featured creatures.)

DIETRICH (stirring uneasily)

Who are you, putty faces?

PUTTY FACES

We're types! We're the poor workingman, and the fat-faced oppressing capitalist. We're the bloated boss, and the flip telephone girl; the Hinglish butler; and the American citizen abroad; the slum settlement worker, and the reformed criminal: we're everybody in our class and nobody in our class: we're a lot and we're nothing.

DIETRICH

Who are you, sir, with such a proudly servile bearing?

THE BUTLER

The butler, sir; if I may say so, the brilliant butler, sir. The best families in the drama always employ one of me, sir—I'm called in in case of trouble and entanglements, and I straighten things out—I also supply the humor. Oh, sir, the drama couldn't do without me and mine no more—we're the chief trick in the trade, sir. If at any time you find this sort of stuff we're giving 'em tonight dragging on the crowd out there, sir, and he's getting sleepy—that's very old, I know, sir, and it's not taking as well as it used to—just ring the bell and I'll come in: I'll be just outside listening at the keyhole, and we'll drink a glass of your very poor weak tea together, sir, and I'll give them some of the excellent repartee I think up waiting behind at dinner, and which I daresn't speak out in the moment of my inspiration, sir.

DIETRICH

And you, little ones there, so debonair, so debonair?

THE LITTLE ONES

We're all the little trills and dainties that have put "class" into the drama—we're the good-looking matinee heroes; we're the young millionaire flipping his cigarette; we're John Drew's clothes; we're the real champagne John drinks at 10 P. M. theoretic breakfasts.

DIETRICH

And who is this shallow-looking female, the dark-haired one with blazing eyes and the curled back, who is stealing up on us through the furniture thickets and the mystic curtains?

THE DARK-HAIRED LADY

I am the smoldering hell-soul with the subconscious ego and a craze for listening to the sea on rainy days. I'm possessed with the unconquerable desire to go out to Somewhere and realize.

"THE PLAY'S THE THING"

THE GRANVILLE BARKER SCENERY (*wearily chanting*)

O, come to me, dear one, come to me: the road or something or other is calling. If you want discomfort, come on, leave your happy home. This atmosphere is stifling me, you, all of us; me, you, him, her, and it, we don't understand each other and nobody can tell what's going on in your soul; no wonder you're peeved; come on, let's get out of this: let's go to Honolulu—to the Fjords of Bomalzang, and pick chunks of the sunset off the rocks. Come on, old girl, don't you hear the wind and the catfish calling you?

THE DARK-HAIRED LADY (*enraptured*)

I hear! I hear! . . . The dulcet music of the catfish swimming in the sunset of the Bomalzang Fjords. No, Roderick, I know you love me, but do not attempt to hold me back: I'm called and I must go forth to Bomalzang to realize.

(A laughing and clacking above, and many voices repeating:)

MANY VOICES

Milk and water, milk and water, milk and water!

DIETRICH

What's this, now, what's this?

MANY VOICES

Us, John, the naughty things in serious drama: scene in the street-walker's room; inside workings of the white slave traffic; the lure of eugenics. We're the wicked speeches of the characters that fill up whole pages and are supposed to impart strength to the play; we're unnecessary profanity:

We follow you where'er you go
As meek as Mary's lambs;
You think us strong but we ain't so—
We're paper "hells" and "damns."

DIETRICH

Am I to be deprived of the luxury of making my characters say "damn"?

THE DAMNS

Damn it, John, damns don't mean a thing, and generally the stronger the character the less he will use them. We're fighting for a meaning: we mean something still, but we won't mean anything if you keep on using us without meaning.

THE HELLS

Same here, Johann! To hell with the hells: there isn't any such place no more, you know.

DIETRICH

And who are you, pale and wandering ghost?—that art here and not here?

GHOST

Not here is right, John. I'm character. I'm an individual: I'm the individual at once like the race and strangely unlike it. I'm the main thing that has been left out of modern drama—and I once was the drama. The end has been overshot by the means, and the means themselves become the end and gods of the workers.

DIETRICH

But there is character in modern plays.

GHOST

A bit—a bit here and there, or else you could not see me at all, but mostly its types. We're all ghosts; there is no flesh on the stage. Let me have fat men round me. We're only shades of beings, and nuances, and French mystic impressions of people. The individual is like the race and subtly different, and the play's the thing to catch the subtle difference. A . . . a . . . a . . . (*The GHOST halts, and falters, and stutters, using a few common throaty tones and well-known gestures to hide his loss of the lines. From the corner of the stage the prompter's voice comes to the rescue, low and clearly.*)

PROMPTER

"A thousand men—"

GHOST

A . . . a . . . (*Whispers heavily to the prompter.*) Louder!

PROMPTER

"A thousand men—"

GHOST

A thousand men are oppressed and a thousand others have flung oppression from them. There's matter here if your dramaturgy could find it out. Behind . . . behind.

PROMPTER

"Behind the tyranny—"

GHOST

Behind the tyranny of circumstance you come upon the allies of tyranny in the character of the man himself—this is where the play should penetrate: and the play has stopped at the doors of general causes, and written admirable economic tracts and sociological reports about "conditions." There is more valuable social reform suggested in a page of Lear, Othello, or Faust—because there is more real, contradictory, intractable life, and not an arbitrary combination of lives—than in all the scientific pamphlets from Ibsen to Brieux.

DIETRICH

But there are frightful conditions to be exposed: why should not the play preach if it wants to? Why should it not lecture and reveal?

GHOST

No reason in the world why it shouldn't do anything in the world it wants to, if it will only recognize what it is doing, and distinguish values. Don't let it say it can teach better by ranting about the "type" and the "average man" than by unveiling a character: because the average man and the type do not exist, and your very vaunted realism becomes a mockery at itself. Don't let it say it can preach better by smearing the stage with the filth of "widespread conditions" than

by watching one *particular* person in contact with a *peculiar* circumstance: because there are no general and widespread conditions—every individual modifies his own circumstance and wraps himself in a cocoon of absolutely unique environment.

DIETRICH

But there are things which are common to all men.

GHOST

We want you to take the soul in its rare moments, when it is different: so that occasionally other souls can link themselves in understanding to it.

DIETRICH

Why, there you are—a flat contradiction of yourself! Linking souls together!—what is that but the extraction of the type? People learn to understand themselves by seeing their similarity with others.

GHOST

Not so. They shall come to your work to understand themselves by seeing their differences. What we bring into the world is not ideas but personality, and the most valuable thing a man has is precisely that bit of him which is different from every other him or her. Now, you destroy that in lumping humanity together, and disowning the values of great groups of people simply because they bring no new ideas into the world. That Brieux realism is reality is its greatest condemnation: art is the picture imagination makes of life, and art the picture remains, and reality the model disappears. Think it over, old top!

DIETRICH (*lost in meditation*)

I will; I will.

STAGE MANAGER (*as before*)

This will never do: this ghost business is too long. We'll have to cut it.

ELECTRICIAN

Couldn't work in some light effects some way, could we?

THE BUTLER (*coming forward*)

Beg pardon, sir; but this is getting kind of involved, sir, and the audience looks bored, except those that think they know what you mean, and they think it's deep. But you and I, sir, that are in on this stuff know better, sir—it don't mean nothing at all, sir, we know that. You better let me give 'em some humor, sir. Turn your back and I'll steal a swig of that cold tea-brandy, that'll make 'em laugh, and then you say something to me—anything at all, it don't make no difference—and I'll repartee. That'll sort of cheer them up, sir, after this ghost stuff; anyways the audience is always glad to see me: I wish I could say as much for my social betters, meaning no disrespect in the world, sir.

DIETRICH (*struggling to rise, but cannot*)

NO! NO, da—

THE DAMNS AND THE HELLS
No unnecessary profanity, John!

DIETRICH (*in agony*)

Oh, oh—get out with you, you fake butler, you nothing, you—you type! The whole crew of you—GET OUT!

ALL (*moving back and then forward threateningly*)

You turn on us, now, do you? You'd turn us out, would you?—you who made pulp and putty of our flesh and blood! But we've got you here on the cliff's edge alone with us now, and we'll show you!

A YOUNG WELL-DRESSED FELLOW (*he speaks, as will those who follow him, very quietly, without excitement, but with ominous distinctness and suggestion*)

I'm the matinee sport of your plays—but you've made a stage-dummy of me for the last time. I'm a tennis fiend, I swim and I'm out for a time off hours—but—from eight to six every day except legal vacations I'm working at the office and keeping right in line for a

raise, raise, raise, and without a single minute or inclination for playing the long a-ed Johnny at afternoon teas and lawn parties.

A WIRELESS TELEGRAPH OPERATOR (*to the sport*)

I'm with you, fellow! (*To DIETRICH.*) Believe me, I've made my last wireless, wreck-saving appearance, in silver harness, straddling a rocking cabin floor, with tin pan thunder behind scenes and magnesium lightning; twisting my face into a frantic fright and shrieking "My God!" while I'm leaning over a toppling chair with my feet flung out backwards like the end on the defense.

TELEPHONE GIRL

If central can help you, call her up, gentlemen. I'm tired of being made to sass connections and stringing drummers, and I'm not getting near enough salary for the awful brilliant life of wit I'm leading.

BUTLER

I was your best assistier in your old meaningless trash, but you won't have me listening at keyholes any more! I don't drink, smoke, nor steal—but I did each of them for you. I don't flirt with the housemaids and I never engage an expository parlor maid who is dusting at seven-thirty P. M. in a bit of gossip about primary things that I know already.

THE DARK-HAIRED LADY

And you're going to leave me out, too, after this. I'm in love with my husband, although you've worn me to the bones slinking round tables and willowing along without a backbone or corsets, and sing-songing a wail about the invitation of the sea. I'll free myself from you now, and get an eternal day off to tend to my children. I'm sick and tired of Ibsen, and I never could understand what he was driving at anyway. I want to see a musical comedy tonight—or better still, I want to stay home and dress dolls in a real doll's house.

AN AUTHOR

Yes! And you made me a stage poet! But you won't have me smoking endless cigarettes and John Drawing round the stage again: I'm going to reserve a particular part of your anatomy for my own satisfaction. A stage poet! What an insult to man and mankind are your stage poets! I am a poet looking for a style as every poet is, not for rest cures and heart salves and symbolic perfumes as your invertebrates are: looking for the one way to say the one thing—that's a poet's quest, and where has that ever appeared in anything you ever wrote about a "poet?" I never dictate, and you'll burden me no more with complicated affairs with divine looking stenographers. I'm not on the rampage for praise, sympathy or a soul mate. I have a wife who is a comfort, a publisher who is fairly decent, and critics who are just and bracing—only perhaps not severe enough.

PROSTITUTE

I am a woman of the streets, but not *your* "white slave"! No man ruined me. My eyes were open! I went on my own account. I've tried to stop occasionally but I never thought it worth while to quit—I didn't want to. I'll have my time while I can—that's my creed! I'm taking my chances, and if I get hit I suppose I'll whimper somewhat, but I'm not bawling till then.

ACTRESS

I'm an actress—a actress; but you never knew one like me. You put my success and fame on your stage but you never had me there. I'm a grind: I'm dying to do a certain few parts: that is my one ambition, and I have no interest in your temperamental parties and wine banquets. I like to talk to quiet, intelligent people, and my delight in life is reading, and fried eggs.

A CLERK

I'm no poor, pitiable clerk—you'll discover that in a few minutes. I'm not daft with melancholia, nor afflicted

with desire to murder my boss, and I'm not terribly oppressed.

DIETRICH (*who has been cowering from them, and at the same time never able to get a word in edgewise, but now upon familiar ground becoming bolder*)

Now, don't tell me. My dear sir, I know! The laboring classes are all oppressed. We live in an age of industrial tyranny. I am indignant at your condition. I know what you need better than you. The average man—

ALL

The average man! Throw him over the cliff!

THE RUSSIAN SCENERY

Death! Vengeance! and that hard word to pronounce: now you're hitting things up, boys, let the blood flow! You're coming into my district now! Torture him fantastically. But don't let's have no more of that ghost stuff and long-winded debates about the "average" and the "type."

THE CLERK

Ah, just a minute; I've been waiting for this chance for years: let me just tell him what I think about the average man, will you; I won't take but a second; I'm always brief and to the point, and then, boys, we'll fix the driveler between ourselves. Let me have a chance—the ghost had his.

RUSSIAN SCENERY

Well, if you're going to, why don't you?

CLERK (*to DIETRICH*)

Average man, you say? There is no average man: there is no class: there is no type. For purposes of statistics and census those terms may be convenient labels: for the drama they are delusions. The only thing in the world that's valuable is character—the indi-

vidual—the individual different from the race—

THE WELL-DRESSED YOUNG MAN

That's all been said already: come on, Polonius, if you can't add anything new, break away and let's get at this idiot that's made fools of us.

THE AUTHOR

And, like Polonius, his talk is so true that nobody believes what he says.

THE CLERK (*perfectly undisturbed*)

Certainly it's true. The moment you get away from census lots and examine Bill Jones or Jim Smith at arm's length he expands and becomes a whole class in himself. The dramatic story that claims to tell a tale of an extracted composite of two or three million people, and calls him the average man, has knocked itself from its own feet, and is talking about no man—

THE WIRELESS OPERATOR

Come on, Windy, cut it short: what's the use of arguing with him. Let's get him!

THE BUTLER

Yes, you're a worse chatter-box than he is.

THE ACTRESS

Yes, Clerk, you're almost funny, you know.

DIETRICH (*laughing and chuckling to himself*)

Isn't he funny, though? Ha! ha! What's he talking about—he doesn't know!

WELL-DRESSED YOUNG FELLOW

Yes, he's funny, all right, but *you* can't laugh. Grip that blanket there, Wireless.

GRANVILLE BARKER SCENERY

Hey there, hey there! Don't take me all apart!

DARK-HAIRED LADY

Oh, knock that scenery over; I hate it and its "atmosphere."

WELL-DRESSED YOUNG FELLOW
Grab a-hold of him, and first we'll toss him in the blanket.

(*The BUTLER goes to DIETRICH and unostentatiously chokes him. DIETRICH writhes a bit, not much. Several of the men handle him roughly; several of the women seem to be trying to gouge out pieces of his face with their fingers. At last they all lay hands on him and seem to pull him away, of course not moving him, as indeed in all the horseplay above no one has actually touched him at any time. But now they seem to be taking something to the center of the room; they put it in the blanket. Though DIETRICH's back is to them, and he sits in his chair, he feels and sees it all as they bounce him up and down with the greatest gusto.*)

DIETRICH

For pity's sake, let me go! The blanket's giving away. I'll go over the cliff's edge in a minute, and I'll drop forever—let me go! let me go!

THE AUTHOR (*grimly*)
We'll let you go, all right.

ALL (*in joyous chorus*)
He cuts a parabolic span
A-flying in pajamas—
The man who never set a man
In any of his dramas!

DIETRICH

Look out! Look out! I'm a respectable man: don't toss me round in a public place with only a nightgown on! Leave me down, leave me down! Oh, help!

(*The blanket rips. A trap door opens and for a long pause they watch him fall. In his chair, DIETRICH is steeling himself against the shock. For several seconds there continues a waiting silence, and then he shrinks together in his chair. He has landed.*)

DIETRICH
Whew! (*As they all gather round*

him and threaten him again.) Don't! Don't fall on top of me—look out!

THE AUTHOR

Let's throw him into that pool of red ink over there in the back of the cave, and ladle him round till his soul looks like the mood of that Russian scenery he used to ladle us round in.

THE DARK-HAIRED LADY

Let's make him climb up those slippery rocks and jump into those imitation breakers he was always driving me into!

DIETRICH

Help, help, help! Oh, save me! Will nobody save me!

A COARSE VOICE

I will! I will save you!

(A big, pudgy, bloated individual rises in the midst of the types. They all shrink from him.)

DIETRICH

Who are you?

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

I am the Spirit of What the Public Wants!

(Dietrich tries to bow to him, but cannot manage it very well, expressing his homage sufficiently, however, in a long-drawn "ah!" The others step still farther back in humiliation and alarm.)

THE TYPES

Oh! OH! Lost, lost!

THE AUTHOR *(stepping out of the group)*

NO! I'll confront the Red Nose. What are you anyway? What the public wants? Nothing of the kind: you're a myth: the public will always take the best they can get, and you give the worst: the world eternally has wanted

to see itself as it is; has eternally wanted truth, and you give lies! You what the public wants! You're only what the managers think the public wants!

BLOATED INDIVIDUAL (*unperturbed*)

Perhaps; very likely—perhaps not: it doesn't make a bit of difference. The public's ideas about its wants are hazy: the manager's on the same subject—right or wrong—are definite: and as the managers pay for the plays and immediately regulate the supply I guess I'll stick round just the same. *(Using the gentle tone employed in training the chorus of a musical comedy.)* Get back into your places!

AUTHOR *(tries to reply, but is compelled to retire)*

It's true, it's true.

DIETRICH

Well, good Mister Public, what's wanted in these last few days—along the serious line, you know? Fantasies are going quite briskly; detective plays are back, I see.

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Stick to the problem play, man: stick. It's right in line with the craze in all of us for puzzles, and it'll never die, glory be!

THE AUTHOR *(stepping out again)*
It's dying now; I—

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Shut up: what do you know? The last one succeeded.

THE AUTHOR

But some day the one after the last one will smash.

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

The last one succeeded. Dietrich, turn out problem plays.

DIETRICH

It's not so easy to turn them out, remember.

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Not easy? Easiest thing in the world! Here it is: a receipt to make a problem play. First, gather and mix badly together the following types: the invertebrate stage artist who has a tremendous fame and more genius, but don't allow the audience to discover it by anything he does or says, because that requires genius on your part to bring out; the wealth-burdened young woman trying to shake her family, developing in the second act into the cigarette-smoking female of advanced ideas and a hunger for the artistic temperament; the soft young thing who has ruined the wet-rag soul of her poet mate with an excess of domesticity and attention to his flannels, becoming in act two the stage-angel with a thirst for self-sacrificing; the blaspheming major, the hell-of-a-something-or-other colonel, and a dash of clubmen who can say "well, I'll be damned!" in nineteen ways; the eternal dust-seeking landlady with a faculty for proverbs; the rich, young rake with a couple of homes; the noble secretary with a speciality for reuniting couples; and the advice-giving friend with a twilight sorrow on his heart. Sift with Ibsen and Shaw; and add one ubiquitous man servant who has taken a night school course in repartee and propounds the lack of philosophy and the impertinence of the playwright. Separate into smug bourgeois and vision-seeing souls wanting to go to some place; remove Nature and dip in "widespread conditions," and set boiling in plenty of stifling atmosphere; strain till everybody is sick; thicken with family conferences and discourses on hereditary diseases; beat with a howling wind in the background and for flavor gradually add several cups of a lonely sea yelling for company through the French windows rear right that open upon a yearning scenery; shake with mock realism, but do not forget a sprinkling of mysticism; pinch in soda of symbolism and stick a red geranium somewhere in the middle. Spice with plenty of suggestiveness; pour in shocks and let rise for two

hours and twenty minutes—but *don't* leave standing in the sunlight: and finally remember, your audience is already sufficiently greased to accept it without sticking. There (DIETRICH): The Recipé to Make a Problem Play!

DIETRICH

Fine! just the thing! Back up that crowd, Public Wants, will you, and make them rehearse.

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Get in your places. Curtain rises—see? Enter weak-kneed artist: that's you.

THE AUTHOR

Let me out of this for once.

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

No, sir! You're the staple ingredient of the lot. Go ahead, start in: wail about stifling atmosphere and something about your millstone wife smothering you with love and bric-a-brac. Go ahead: start in!

THE AUTHOR

Start in? Why, I haven't any lines!

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Haven't any lines? And what do you need lines for? Man, haven't you been doing this for years, and don't you know that "lines" have no place in our *drama*? Save us, don't you know the trick yet? Say something about choking . . . art . . . twilight . . . sunset . . . sea voices . . . anything moony you can think of. Start in!

THE AUTHOR (*striking the pose*)

My head's enveloped by a cloud. . . . I have lost my desire to create. . . . I want to get away, away from this all . . . this atmosphere is stifling me. . . . Perhaps out there . . . under the wide sky and by the gray sea I can win back my soul . . . my soul that here is covered over like the linen summer-coverings cover the parlor chairs.

THE GRANVILLE BARKER SCENERY
(*bored*)

Come over here: come over here to-

wards me: this is some more of my stuff; you're in my district now.

THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Fine! You did that bit fine: give us some more—

THE AUTHOR (*suddenly comes forward with a determined air, and stands in the center of the room*)

Fine! And you want more! No, No, no, no! The spirits of Cervantes and Rabelais come to my aid: help me to free myself! Spirits of all great laughers, who have struck at the flummery and the pow-wowning of fashions and doctrines; who have laid falseness and feebleness low with the lightning of your smiling, and pierced with the sharpness of irony the wrongs of pompous nonsense; scourge these canters and sing-singers: give me strength! Oh, send some god-gifted descendant to us who will show to these driveler's the folly of their folly: and cut through the entangled vagueness of their mysteries and their pretensions with the shining edge of a jest! (*Turning to the TYPES.*) Companions, aid me! Night! cover us! Envelop us and let us drive this bloated, loud-voiced prophet of the box-office out into the darkness of an empty parquet!

(*It becomes darker and darker as he speaks. There are confused sounds of struggling on the black stage.*)

ALL THE TYPES

Drive him out! drive him out!

VOICE OF THE BLOATED INDIVIDUAL

Dietrich, help me! Oh, help, help, Dietrich!

(*There is silence. DIETRICH has fallen back into deep brooding again. From a spot before him light begins to spread softly. He looks up. The figure of a beautiful woman is coming into stronger and stronger clearness under the beams of delicate colored lights. He watches her breathlessly. There is a pause. In the pause:*)

STAGE MANAGER (as before)

There now, that's great. Bring round the light just a bit more: sparkle up that buckle on her belt—that's it. That's what I call effective.

ELECTRICIAN

What did I tell you? Give me lights and half a chance and I'll make anything go.

DIETRICH

You—you: who are you?

FIGURE

I am the answer: the only answer. I am Beauty: Beauty that has been murdered. I am Beauty that once was like the sunlight—radiant and seeking open places—gay, laughing, striding through the morning; walking in the laughter of noon, when men trod in the glory of the full day. There are sisters of mine still left that men call the only beauty: dawn and twilight sisters, that hold in shadowy corners, who are wrapped in mystery and speak unclearly—men have called them fair, because men can no longer look upon my clarity. I was Beauty, but I was also strength, and men who saw me became strong: they rule men with weakness and fears. I was Beauty, but I was also joy: they rule men's hearts with sorrow: oh, sorrow is a holy thing, men say, yet I gave them strength and joy to go out and conquer sorrow. I was Beauty, but I was also boldness and fearless distinctness—but they are shrunken and awesome and vague. I was once Queen—now I am despised and the drudge of grubbers in useless places. Men who followed me followed the way of effort and were rewarded with power: men who follow them follow the way of dreamy indolence and easy thought. Oh, come out into the sunlight, Art!

(*The figure fades. A pause. A voice calls from without. DIETRICH starts. It becomes lighter.*)

DIETRICH

The answer?

(The voice from without calls again.
DIETRICH awakes.)

THE VOICE FROM WITHOUT

Mr. Dietrich, here's the whiskey and the lunch. I got it in just four minutes—now, I call that going some!

DIETRICH

Eh? What? Lunch? Four minutes! Four minutes? *(He rubs his eyes and looks blinking and blankly about.)* Lunch? Four minutes?

(He crosses and turns out the electric lights which were lighted the moment he woke. The room is now lighted only by the soft red glow from the fireplace. He opens the hall door and then looks back again.)

DIETRICH

Oh, Hel—excuse me . . . that da—pardon me! . . . that, that fireplace! Lights! Lights! *(He turns them on and goes to the fireplace.)* Hey, there, Staney, tell the electrician to turn these blasted lights in this fake fireplace out, will you?

THE ELECTRICIAN

What! What! Do you want to spoil the final curtain effect? Are you crazy, man?

DIETRICH *(taking up a small rug and throwing it over the fender and backing a chair against it)*

Yes, I want to spoil every effect! I

am going to tell the story of ineffectiveness. *(He turns out the lights and it is really dark. He fumbles his way toward the door, knocks his shins against many things, and his temper, not improved by drowsiness, against still more.)*

DIETRICH *(hitting fairly into something particularly hard)*

Ugh! wouldn't this be the place for a few good damns though! *(He fumbles at the knob, and before opening the door looks back once more, a fact known to the audience only through the unction with which he says):* Now it's black! None of your damn—have I got "damn" in my system?—none of your soft glow stuff for me after this! . . . "Men who followed me followed the way of effort and were rewarded with power! . . . Come out into the sunlight, Art!"

(He opens the door and a great swath of light cuts across the black room. He goes out into the light, and leaves the door open. The curtain descends very slowly.)

ELECTRICIAN *(as before)*

That's it, eh: How's that strike you? I tell you that's about unique for a final curtain—that kind of light arrangement—and some effective, I say.

STAGE MANAGER

Great! Just what the public wants!

CURTAIN



B**EWARE** of the man with a dimple in his chin: he has been loved before.



THE CALL OF THE WILD

By Helen Woljeska

ELINOR MULHOLLAND sat before her dressing-table, polishing her pink nails with pious concentration. The large oval mirror willingly reflected the vision of her Juno-esque figure and beautiful face—a face that owed part of its girlish blush, no doubt, to the long nap and delicious bath its owner had just enjoyed. The large bedroom with its gobelin blue hangings, its shimmering mahogany furniture and tall, lace-shrouded windows opening upon a shady garden, formed a frame of peaceful opulence for this genre picture of a good-looking woman in charmingly negligent undress.

Mrs. Mulholland was absolutely satisfied with the world and herself. Every one of her deliberate, graceful movements bespoke this utter content with the present moment, this sunning and lingering in a pleasant today. Indeed, why should she hurry? Her husband was still in Europe. None of her friends had returned from their summer outings. She alone, with Tom, had come home early, to enjoy undisturbed the resplendent end of summer in her comfortable suburban home. She could take all the time she pleased at her toilette, for, thank heavens, at this season there were no engagements, no invitations, no calls to crowd one's days. . . . Just then she heard the doorbell ring.

A few moments later the maid entered, carrying on a quaint Japanese bronze tray a small card. "Mr. Trevor" read Mrs. Mulholland. She gave a little start, and a frown appeared on her smooth brow. For a second she seemed undecided. Then, in an uncon-

cerned way: "I will come down. Show Mr. Trevor into the library, and come back to help me dress." Left alone, she allowed herself a few moments' reverie, staring before her as though looking far into the past, and her eyes were gloomy, her lips hard. Finally she rose and, throwing off her cobwebby peignoir, slowly began to dress.

"How old he looks—" was her first thought when, coming down the broad, dark stairs, she beheld the man who had stepped out into the hall to meet her. Her white, firm, bejeweled hand scarcely touched his fingers, but her dark eyes were intent upon his face, scrutinizing, probing, censuring. He greeted her with rather an artificial affability and his face broke into innumerable lines, which to her seemed so many witnesses of numberless past hypocrisies and ignominies. How could I ever have cared for him? she asked herself with a little shudder of revulsion. And furtively, her eyes went in radiant greeting to her husband's portrait on the wall.

"You must have been surprised to receive my card," he began when they were seated. "In fact, it is rather unusual. . . ."

She shrugged her shoulders in impatience. "Why did you come?" she asked curtly.

"To see my boy," he answered, as brief as she. Her abruptness seemed rather a relief to him.

She could not quite repress a sneer. "You were able to get along without him many years. . . . Do you know just exactly how many?"

"Ten," he answered readily. "Tom must be sixteen now."

"Yes, ten," she said, "and for seven years he has been Tom Mulholland. There is no use dragging the past into his bright young life."

"I would be very happy to see—my son," he said, almost humbly.

"Why just now?" She was not convinced at all.

"Sentimental reasons!" He laughed, somewhat ruefully. "I've been through a beastly pneumonia this spring. Death-bed repentance—new-leaf intentions, etc." He looked her straight in the eyes, with a candor unusual in him. His eyes were as beautiful as ever, velvety and melancholy, under long, curved black lashes. For a moment it seemed to her she was gazing into her own son's eyes. . . . Her firmness began to waver.

"Still," she said, more gently, "what can it lead to? There is no possibility anywhere in the future for your two lives to be reunited."

He bowed his head. "I know," he said, "I know. Yet there might be friendship between father and son—does it seem impossible to you?" His lips trembled in characteristic fashion—she well remembered this sign of his rising emotions. How worn he looked, worn and weary, his thin brown cheeks lined, his hair grizzled—a striking contrast to the athletic, robust, successful Mulholland smiling his self-reliant smile over there on the wall. . . .

Abruptly, she rose.

"Tom is at the Amackassan, playing tennis. I will telephone him."

The conversation over the wire was delicate and took some time. Its nature could not be guessed from the quietly composed countenance of Mrs. Mulholland as she returned, directing the maid who wheeled a tea-service for three.

"Let us have our tea on the piazza," she suggested, "it is cool there and lovely, and one has a great view of the Hudson."

Like a thoughtful hostess she installed him in a broad, green wicker chair and pleasantly poured his tea. "What do you think of this view—

would you not enjoy painting it?" . . . With a flash this rather conventional question brought back to her old associations, ambitions, dreams. His work! How was it progressing? Was he as enthusiastic as of old, or had the flame of his genius been smothered by the same curse that had destroyed his home-life and love?

At first guardedly, then more and more openly, he told of his work, his plans, his artistic successes, his commercial failings. Elinor, listening, was quick to acknowledge to herself that these latter must be blamed principally on his dissolute habits, though in part they might be caused, as according to his version, by ill health and ill luck. Ill luck! She never had much patience with this sort of self excuse. Still no doubt . . . there was something in it. She knew well the extent of his genius, and that men less gifted and just as licentious had made a success in the world. . . . Ah! luck had been hard on him! In the brighter outdoor light she saw the threadbareness of his carefully cleaned and pressed suit, and with a sudden pang realized how hard his economic restrictions must be for one so particular as to externals, so given to lavish indulgence and impulsive generosity.

"Why don't you smoke?" she abruptly asked—for she once more saw him as in the past, when he never was without his cigarette. He seemed delighted and, smiling, offered her his case. But she shook her head. "I've given up," she said. It sounded almost regretful. Then, quite unconsciously returning to habits long forgotten (Mr. Mulholland abhorred tobacco) she took the little box out of Trevor's hand, lit a match, and offered it to him. The wistful sarcasm of the scene subtly came home to him. But Elinor seemed unawares. She was merged in the long ago, and could not for the moment remember the indignities he had heaped upon her, the cynic contempt with which he spurned her love as soon as his own had cooled. After all, in spite of his many infidelities, he had been

true in one way—he had never married again. She had been his one, his only wife! And here he was, once more within reach of her touch and voice. Once more she listened to his rich voice, drank in the pure outline of his beautiful head and hands, breathed the subtle aroma, blended of Latakia and oil paint, strangely suggestive of her most intimate memories. Was there nothing she could do for him, now that he was aged before his time, broken in health, down in luck! Incoherently, a wild thought formed itself in the background of her mind—she saw herself his model and his muse—bringing him fame and wealth. . . . All the while she sat intently listening and reconstructing for herself his life since they had parted. . . .

Their low, searching conversation was unceremoniously interrupted by a coal-black Boston terrier, jumping up the piazza steps, and greeting his mistress in a frenzy of joy. Slowly behind him came the tall, tanned Tom, in spotless flannel—so like his father that Elinor's heart started in terror and joy. Tom kissed his mother. Then father and son shook hands in a constrained manner.

"Well, old man," said Trevor with the whimsical smile Elinor had adored in former times and was not quite insensible to now, "had a good game?" and for a while a perfunctory conversation was carried on, descanting on tennis and other sports, for which Trevor never in his life had cared a continental and concerning which, accordingly, his ignorance was dense. This theme being exhausted, high school and the prospective college furnished topics which led by easy stages to the more intimate discussion of Tom's future choice of a career.

The young man, rather sullen from the beginning, deeply resented this turn of the conversation. His handsome dark face flushed, and his lips trembled angrily. Did this man presume to have a voice in Tom's future life? This man who physically, it is true, was his father, but who otherwise never

had deserved that name—who had brought but shame and heartache upon him and his mother! What did he mean, anyway, by intruding upon them now that his true father, the true and faithful husband of his mother, was absent? Should Tom tolerate this at all? He rose and cleared his throat in an ominous manner—well known to Elinor who was familiar with these symptoms in the second generation. Before her son had the chance to deliver one syllable of the speech that vehemently crowded his brain, she stood beside him, her hand on his shoulder, her eyes conjuring his. "Tom," she said softly, "Mr. Trevor and I will excuse you if you now keep the appointment you told me about this morning—see, the sun is going down, you will have to hurry. . . ." For a moment the two stood silent, eye in eye. Then Tom dropped his lids. And turning to Trevor, he stiffly bowed, and left.

A long silence on the piazza. The sky above the Palisades turned from flaming red and orange to cool bluish green. And with the suddenness peculiar to September evenings the sun was replaced by a faint glittering half moon. "I must go," said Trevor, rising. He had well understood the wordless sentence pronounced upon him by his son. The consciousness that he deserved it did not make it less crushing. What had he dreamed of, anyway? There was no doubt that he had done grievous wrong. Had he expected Fate to forgive and mortals to forget? He laughed sharply. Elinor's hand closed around his fingers. "I am sorry . . ." she whispered.

Slowly, hand in hand, they left the piazza, entering the large panelled library where, under colored dome, electric lamps shed a subdued and mellow light. From the wall, Mr. Mulholland looked down upon his wife—and she returned the look defiantly. What had this smug, self-satisfied man up there ever been to her, anyway? Had he ever made her sob in ecstasy? Had he ever quickened into the glory

of being any possibilities asleep within her? Had he ever needed her with his whole body and soul? Or was it rather a handsome figurehead for his social establishment, a pleasant companion for his leisure hours, that he had chosen in her? She shrugged her shoulders, as if to dismiss an unimportant subject impatiently. And her mind rushed on to different visions—a shabby studio made resplendent, a gray-haired man made young, and

an impassive statue come back to life. . . .

"Good night, Nell," said Trevor, unsteadily.

They stood face to face, his eyes very dark, his mouth drawn.

"Hal," she whispered. Then, clasping her hands behind his neck, slowly, slowly, she bent his face down upon hers.

"You will see me again . . ." she breathed against his dry lips.



BLUE BUTTERFLIES

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

HAD I been made a butterfly,
Breaking from the dew,
I'd fain have been the little wandering
Winsome thing of blue;
Dimmed by the sky its color,
Like melody of rain;—
Too far from Heaven to be but love,
Too near to be but pain.



THE BEGGAR-WOMAN SINGS

By Padraic Colum

MAVOURNEEN, we'll go far away
From the net of the crooked town
Where they grudge us the light of the day.

Around my neck you will lay
Two tight little arms of brown.
Mavourneen, we'll go far away
From the net of the crooked town.

And what will we hear on the way?
The stir of wings up and down, says she,
In nests where the little birds stay!

Mavourneen, we'll go far away
From the net of the crooked town,
Where they grudge us the light of the day!

THE CHANCE THAT RHODA TOOK

By Dora Ingram

SUNDAY night. A thin mist was settling on the roofs of uptown New York. At her table in front of the window, Rhoda Winthrop watched the sky darken and heard, with growing irritation, the voices of the newsboys crying war specials. Coming nearer, they seemed to fill every corner with raucous sound. Rhoda's discontent quickened to anger.

"Why," she asked herself, "why on earth can't somebody pass a law or ordinance or something forbidding all row of that kind on at least one day of the week?"

Her anger spent itself even as she spoke. Her attitude relaxed and, drawing out a low chair near the light, she took a book from a shelf near her and made a vain effort to read.

From the windows below came the sound of a popular dance tune. All the various sounds that can emanate from an apartment house in any district seemed that night to Rhoda intensified and trebled. Children cried; a cornet attacked again and again something that called for shrills and weird shrieks; a would-be tenor tried something with unintelligible words; a piano and a phonograph played a discordant duet; and with these there were the hundred and one ordinary sounds associated with the business of living.

Rhoda closed the book and snapped the light off. The sky, with traces of the departed sun's splendor, now lent beauty to the seemingly miles of roofs. With the darkened room, Rhoda's thoughts grew introspective. Curiously she analyzed her thoughts, more than a trifle disgusted that she could be in a condition to be so receptive for all these

irritating sounds; ordinarily they did not trouble her. Now, morbidly, her mind retraced a conversation she had overheard some days before. A man (she had noted his extreme youth after hearing his statement) had contended to his companion that after thirty a woman might just as well be wrapped up in tin foil and put on a shelf—or go to the country and look after her sister's babies or "something like that."

Eyes on the darkening sky line, Rhoda wondered if such a thing could be true. She reviewed her years. Twenty-eight of them. And what had they given her? She had dreamed when she was eight that she would die at twenty. And marriage, with adorable little children, she had thought, would naturally come before that. Twenty then had seemed an impossible age—an age when one should be ready to die. But here she was—twenty-eight, and neither married nor with possibilities of such an event ever happening. Was she one of the women doomed never to be loved—never to be made love to, even? She had had attentions, yes; but generally from men who repelled her rather than drawn her liking. Was there not one man somewhere in the world for her? She had thought that every woman has at some time in her life a complete, a perfect time, when life is—as she had heard some poet say—"one glad sweet song." Nothing of that sort had come to her. Her past years had been nothing but monotonous, dreary effort. The business of just living had occupied all her time.

Now there were but two years left before she reached the dreaded age

when, she assured herself, she would have to be wrapped in tin foil and "put on the shelf." Were those two years going to contain all that had been missing in the past years? Or was she to stand by and see her friends and other girls married and then, later, go and make much of and nurse their babies? Why was it?

Could one have seen in that light one would have noticed that Rhoda's eyes held in them qualities perhaps that compelled respect and liking, but not always love; the quality that holds a little of obstinacy, a fair amount of self-will, and a little, perhaps just a little of self-consciousness.

Then mentally she shook herself, knowing it was probably her own fault she was so much alone. Certainly she told herself, her self-control was slipping rather than her nerves. She must do something instead of idling away her precious spare hours in front of this window, fascinating as the outlook was.

The screech of the phonograph had stopped and a silence had fallen, only to be broken, however, by a worse screech from one of the women who, in large numbers and deluded by some one more weak-minded than themselves, flock to the city yearly to take lessons in voice training at the numberless establishments devoted to harboring their especial form of madness.

Rhoda got up, shoved back her chair violently and, despite the heat, fastened the window. She would go out and walk. The Drive, at least, would offer her diversion. She bathed and dressed methodically and with care. Her suit and hat were quiet but, finished, Rhoda attracted attention for that very quietness. Drawing on long silken gloves, she surveyed herself in the long mirror. There was no appraisement of self in that look—no vanity, rather a faint disgust. Rhoda was seldom satisfied with herself.

Once on the Drive, introspection gave way to curiosity, a lightness and gladness of being. She walked lightly down, glancing at the pairs on the

benches and noting, with tolerant, half-jealous appreciation, the exuberance of the younger men and girls. What had they that she hadn't, she asked herself. She swung about abruptly, of a sudden tired of the dim, breezeless walk; there would be a breeze further north. There was. It came from the west, caressing her face tenderly, scarcely stirring the leaves. The buses, heavily laden, rumbled by. Autos, filled with glad though day-tired crowds, flashed by, leaving faint swirls of dust behind them. An occasional rider. Each and all seemed to have a place, purpose, friends. Only she was alone and friendless.

The lights of the Palisades winked brightly in a gloom accentuated by the withdrawal of the glare of the Amusement Park. She stopped and looked down the river; it had more moods, she thought, than she herself. But unlike her own moods, those of the river were fascinating, attractive, even lovable. A slowly moving string of barges, each carrying a light that somehow toned with the sombreness of the river's mood; there a power boat moving quickly to anchor. She watched the barges, moving very, very slowly. How good it would be, she thought, to live on a barge. To have time and leisure to go slowly, to let life and all outside things pass her by for a little while. Alone? No; she might just as well stay in the turmoil and rush of the city. Her thoughts raced swiftly. Where was the man who would also desire to live on a barge? Who would complete and make perfect—perhaps prolong—her remaining two years? Foolish, foolish.

She turned from the river as a bus came by. Seeing an empty seat on the top she hailed it and climbed up. There was always novelty from the top of a bus. But the thought of the barge returned in spite of the more quickly moving landscape. That slow-moving, comfortable-looking barge. With the thought also came a beginning of a faint spirit of adventure. At Columbus Circle, her lassitude entirely gone, a

smile came to her lips, a resolve was half born within her. Fifth Avenue, with its never-failing sense of dignity and of stimulus, found the resolve definite. She almost smiled at the lions gracing the Library. A little further and she dismounted. Stood on the pavement a moment, then turned west.

She had determined to make the acquaintance of a man in a way frowned on by her own convictions and common sense. The resolve added color to her cheeks and sparkle to her eyes. She reached the corner and Broadway. Here she had intended to stand a minute and see what happened, but she found herself across the street without looking up, it seemed. Her resolve faded a little. On the bus it had seemed the simplest thing in the world; you had to stand a little while—such a little while—a man would come up and say, probably,

"Good evening. Are you alone? Would you care for a walk?" or something of that kind. Rhoda pictured the kind of man, had formed her reply. She would say:

"Why, good evening. Yes, I think I would." And the trick would be done. It was easy. But actually started on her adventure, a little of her zest and self-confidence vanished. Here on a very much darker than she liked street, she hesitated, walked swiftly to Sixth Avenue, up one block, then turned east to go back to Broadway and Fifth Avenue. This time, instead of crossing the wide thoroughfare as she had done before, quickly and without looking up, she waited while a car passed. And instead of giving her courage as she had hoped it would, the sense of disappointment she had first felt on seeing the Great White Way returned. It might once have been bright, alert, important, beguiling, as a woman is just before she is married and just afterward. But as a woman will, it had settled down to the placid content and rotundity of middle age; had taken to itself, also, Rhoda thought, a general haphazard untidiness. Thankfully she turned to

cross Fifth Avenue, her resolve already a thing of the past.

The street she crossed from Broadway was not too well lighted, or seemed so after the glare of Broadway. Several automobiles were ranged, mostly tenantless, apparently waiting for their owners. Approaching them, Rhoda noticed their name plates and numbers; their make, lines, and finish. The last car nearest the Avenue because a little way apart from the others, she had time to notice a little more carefully. Imperceptibly she walked a little slower, for even in a city where cars of beauty in finish and design are a common occurrence, this one stood apart. For the briefest second Rhoda stood still, appraising it generously, her busy mind in the years ahead and to the desired corners of the earth such a car, were it her own, would take her. To the top of any mountain in the world, she thought, and easily from New York to San Francisco; it seemed to embody silence and speed, the two virtues Rhoda held of most account.

But her dreams vanished very quickly as a voice behind her said,

"Good evening."

Remembrance of her resolve just gone sent the color over her face from brow to chin as she turned abruptly. Facing her was a tall man regarding her unsmilingly, yet in friendly manner. Steadily, and without a sign of the nervousness that consumed her, she returned his greeting. Then as he still regarded her without speaking, her impulse was to walk away. Then he spoke. Rhoda's confidence returned, for his

"May I smoke?" was the last thing in the world she expected him to say. Silently she nodded consent. Then when he had chosen a cigar with care, lit it with equal care, he said:

"I shall feel more at home, you see." She knew then that he was almost, perhaps, as nervous as she herself had been. She had already decided that did he ask her to ride with him, she would accept, but when his

"Would you care for a ride?" came, she parried.

"Is that your car?" she asked.

"That is my car," he returned.

"Well—I—"

But the man did not wait for her reply, had she known what she wanted to say. His hand was busy with the wheel, starting the engine. Then he opened the door.

"Coming?"

Rhoda hesitated, afraid after all.

"Do you expect me to?"

He regarded her steadily before answering.

"Well, yes. I think I do expect you to."

She stood still a second, and he spoke again.

"But," and Rhoda saw that he could smile very nicely, "but I never allow myself to imagine what a lady will do in any circumstances. I wait and see."

But this time he didn't wait and see. He held out his hand and drew her to the door of the car. Without a word, Rhoda stepped in, allowed him to place a light wrap over her knees; then when he had settled himself beside her, said,

"I think it's all right, don't you?"

He looked at her.

"Of course."

The car started without a sound, almost, and glided into Fifth Avenue. The man at the wheel looked ahead, not seeming to notice Rhoda. Up the Avenue, past the Plaza, and into the Park. Here the air was cooler. A very slender, very new moon hung up in the sky, and Rhoda wondered the name of its star attendant. Then she glanced at her silent companion. Somehow he reminded her oddly of her thoughts of the barge. Yet they were moving anything but slowly now. Now they were in Broadway. Now in the Drive, with the river like a purple sheet of shadow to their left. There were fewer travelers here than there had been earlier and the car, as though released from a spring, shot forward. The trees slid into one another; the great houses were a confused mass slipping past like a dream, and before

Rhoda caught her breath Grant's Tomb was gazing down at them serenely, for the man had slowed down. Now they were just crawling, the man turned to Rhoda.

"Now we can talk. Are you comfortable?"

Rhoda, not yet wholly recovered from the suddenness of this thing she had started, and steeped in a well-being she had rarely enjoyed, looked at him as at someone she had known all her life.

"I'm more than comfortable, thanks," she said. "And you?"

"That's good. I'm all right."

He reached down and tucked the cover around her feet.

"But I want to talk to you," he continued. "I want to know just how you happened to come along tonight, and just why you came along with me, and—" as Rhoda put out a protesting hand, laughing, "and everything."

"Everything?"

Rhoda's eyes smiled into his, and they both laughed. That laugh made them friends. Rhoda slipped her hand into the crook of his arm, not for warmth, but because this was her first adventure, and she liked, quite unaccountably, this man who was sharing her first adventure with her, and was proving so desirable. He felt her hand, and because it was his first adventure, too, and because he liked, quite unaccountably, this girl who was sharing his first adventure with him, he gave no sign that he knew the hand was there. She was praising the machine. He was proud of the machine, liked to hear it praised. He told himself that he liked, also, the way she talked. He had appreciated, in a somewhat unconscious way, the fact that she hadn't spoken until he had.

"But," he broke in, "you're not telling me what I asked you to tell me."

Rhoda laughed contentedly.

"Suppose you begin and tell me about yourself," she said. "Suppose you tell me why you said 'Good evening' to me."

"I'll tell you if you'll tell me why you answered me," he teased.

"But how can I?" she protested. "No. You tell me first what you liked about me that made you say 'Good evening'."

"Shall I, really?" he asked.

"You must, really," she told him.

Looking at her steadily:

"I don't know that you will like it, mind."

"I shall," she assured him.

"Well," and as though he were ashamed of saying it, "I liked your back."

At which she laughed out.

"Now you tell me," he continued, "what made you say 'Good evening' to me."

Her hand was still within his arm, but as she spoke she drew it away.

"I'll tell you," she said. "I answered you because earlier in the evening I'd made up my mind that I would come downtown and make the acquaintance of the first man who spoke to me."

The man stared ahead, evidently digesting this. Then he turned to her.

"And was I the first?"

"You were," she answered.

For a little time they both sat silent, the car very slowly eating up the road. Then without looking at her the man spoke.

"You won't believe me, perhaps, but I'm telling you the truth when I say that you are the first girl I have ever spoken to as I did this evening."

He waited, not for word from her, but she spoke.

"I do believe you. Why should you think I wouldn't?"

As though he hadn't heard her, he went on.

"I have been in this city two months on business. Day before yesterday was the first day I had been able to look around and see there were other things here besides work. After dinner tonight I sat in my room and decided I'd better get back to my own town where I have at least a home to keep me from getting as lonely as I've been around here."

Unconsciously his voice quickened. Rhoda looked at him; felt for the first time the strength, physical and mental, betrayed in the hands at the wheel, the head, the lines of the chin. He went on.

"I've been so rushed I'd give almost anything to quit right now and get back. And I was hungry for someone to talk to. And as I came out of the hotel, you were standing looking at my car. I spoke to you because I just couldn't help it. Now," he took her hand and drew it through his arm again. "Now I've told you everything. I'm more than grateful to you for coming along with me. Tell me about yourself."

Then, as though he had shaken off a load, and that her coming confession was a foregone delight, he said:

"Say, isn't it a wonderful night? And isn't it good to be alive, after all? Just look at that old river! And that old barge there. Lazy old thing!"

Rhoda looked. How funny that there should be a barge there now, and that he should notice it, she thought. But she stayed silent. Then the man, noticing her silence:

"You're not offended with me?"

"Offended?" she smiled at him. "I should think not. I'm wondering what time it is, though, and whether I ought not to be getting indoors."

He looked at her before consulting his watch. And

"Ten o'clock precisely," he announced. "Where do you want to go and what time do you want to get back?"

"Well—" she began. He interrupted her.

"You're surely not going to ask me to turn back right now? Why, I thought you were going to tell me what made you accept my invitation? Come —play fair." And he smiled down at her.

Rhoda looked at him, thinking at the back of her mind that he did seem very nice, and his smile was so dependable. Then she suddenly made up her mind to talk to him.

"Yes, I will," she said out loud. "I've always tried to play fair, anyway."

The car was just crawling. The night was perfectly still, and beautiful with the beauty that sometimes compels in temperaments like Rhoda Wintoun's an unrest and discontent. The thought of the loneliness, the effort, the never-ending struggle of the past years; the hours she had been hungry for congenial companionship; the vision of the years ahead, to be spent probably, in like manner. Remembrance came over her, and a dread came to her as she thought that loneliness would be more terrible as she grew older. Yes, she would tell him.

And, sitting there, looking ahead, she told him. The words came pouring out. Then when she had finished, with the brief events that had led to her taking the bus downtown, she sat silent. For a moment the man did not speak. He, too, was thinking. Strange, that in all the great City of New York, with its countless thousands of human beings, he and this girl should meet. That he could make her less lonely, less unhappy, he did not doubt. That she had responded to some subconscious need within him from the first he now knew. He would make her happy. She would never need to even think of making such resolves as the one which had, however, given her to him.

These thoughts occupied but seconds.

To Rhoda, waiting for his next words, however, it seemed hours had passed since she had spoken. She looked at his face, the strong profile showing nothing of what his thought might be. All at once she was angry, very angry with herself. Babbling to a perfect stranger. What a little fool she was, anyway.

But anger, thought of her own foolishness, everything, was swept away the next moment, for the man turned with a smile, freeing his left hand to take her two hands lying clasped in her lap. He accomplished with perfect safety the somewhat hazardous undertaking of guiding a big car and looking into a girl's eyes at one and the same time.

"You haven't told me your name yet," he said. "But, little friend, we're neither of us going to be lonely or unhappy any more or ever again, are we? Are we?"

Rhoda, tears trembling in her eyes, and the memories of the years gone and the years to come still with her, could only whisper:

"I don't know, really."

But his answer, clear, firm, ringing true, drove away doubt and any sad memories she might have had left.

"We're not, I tell you."

And she, with a vague content she did not try to define, answered not a word.



MANY a woman sacrifices everything for her complexion—including her complexion.



A MAN who believes that he has plenty of friends is getting ready to lose the one or two that he actually has.



A MAN is never so sure of a thing as when it isn't so.



THE COUNTRY OF BROMIDIA

By Paul Hervey Fox

"**T**HE world is a small place, after all," said George Smith, sinking down in the chair Jones offered him, and pointing a pistol at his host's heart. "For I have tracked you to your lair," he went on, "you, Henry Jones, who married the girl I loved."

At that moment Mrs. Jones burst into the room. "Remove that pistol," she cried, "or I shall call a policeman!"

"Don't try," said Smith wearily. "When you really want a policeman, there's never one within miles."

"See here," said Jones curtly, "I never heard of you before. I suppose you really came here to rob me. The most valuable things in the house are the pictures in this room. Take them and leave us. I haven't had dinner yet, and dinner is my best meal."

"I don't know much about art, but I know what I like," said Smith, looking up critically at the pictures. "Besides," he added, "I'm here not for robbery but for revenge."

Mrs. Jones gave a sudden start. "George!" she cried.

"So you know me!" snarled Smith.

"I know you better than you do yourself," answered the woman. "And you haven't changed a bit."

"Why didn't you answer my letters?" Smith asked in a low, tense voice.

"I had no reason to," said Mrs. Jones. "I thought I loved you at the time, but of course it wasn't really love. What became of you after we parted?"

"I ought not to tell you," said Smith brokenly, "but I know you'll understand. When you did not answer my letters, I went to the dogs. Then the Salvation Army got hold of me. They reach such a large class that the

churches never get in touch with, you know. Today I came back to ruin you and your husband. But after what you have told me it would be unconscionable to exact a penalty. So I shall leave you in peace."

"Come and see us often now you have found the way," said Mrs. Jones.

"It is impossible," answered the man sternly. He gazed through the window at the clouds piling up on the horizon, and added after a pause: "I fear it's going to rain, and I have no umbrella."

"It's always sure to rain," said Mrs. Jones, smiling at her delicious witticism, "when you leave your umbrella home."

A servant entered with his hat and coat, and Smith handed the fellow a coin. "This tipping system is terrible," he said when the latter had gone, "but what can you do about it? And it's not the money I mind; it's the principle of the thing."

He opened the door and walked down to the street. Then while Jones and his wife watched him, horror-struck, from the window he stepped out into the gutter and put the revolver to his temple. There came a sharp report, and with a sickening thud he fell forward on his face.

In a moment all was bustle and confusion.

"Am I as fat as this woman running up the street?" asked Mrs. Jones at the window.

"Hardly!" said Jones. "You're as pretty as a picture."

The two went in and telephoned to the nearest hospital.

"Fifty years ago," said Jones, wait-

ing for the connection, "no one would have believed that a person could talk through a wire.

"And yet," said his wife, smiling down at him, "now that I have the

'phone I don't see how I ever did without it."

And a few moments later they sat down comfortably to their evening meal.



ALL THEY THAT PASS BY

By John McClure

I HEARD the Salvation Army
Beating their praying-drum
On the crowded streets of the city
Where the mad folk go and come.

Blowing their praying-trumpet,
Calling our ears to their crier
Telling about the judgment of God
To set the world on fire.

Blowing their praying-trumpet,
Beating their praying-drum,
Kneeling to God in terror,
Calling to sinners "Come!"

And O, they were terribly earnest,
Bowed in a solemn row
At the side of the city side-walk
Where the world-mad come and go.

But they gazed with wistful faces
On many a laughing eye.
It seemed there was no use praying
Where the painted ladies went by.



SONG

I WATCHED the sun sink into the sea.
Red as a rose-petal was he.

I watched him come in the morning up,
And he was then like a buttercup.

And 'twixt the setting and rise of sun
I dreamed all night of my lovely one.

THE RED ROSE

By Frances Norville Chapman

TO Vatchell's surprise he found himself having tea with Madge Bannister, rather, he was going to have tea with her, for she had left the room and he heard the faint clatter of china and the careful opening and shutting of drawers.

Vatchell had known Miss Bannister for a long time, if the blurred impression that he had received when their infrequent meetings projected her within the range of his vision could be called knowing. He had rather liked the faint Autumnal quality of her beauty, but he had sometimes felt that her graciousness was exaggerated, an over-elaboration of manner which failed to disguise a vague and unapproachable detachment of spirit. However, she had not piqued him, and until to-day he had exchanged scarcely half a hundred words with her.

Being a man of sound literary taste and judgment, Vatchell rather avoided literary women, or, at least, "women who wrote." He had heard Miss Bannister mentioned as an unsuccessful writer, but always with the claim that she wrote too well for the taste of the reading public; that editors were afraid to offer her delicate fare, except in homeopathic doses, to the uncultivated palates of their subscription lists—the usual claim of unpublished genius.

It was not until this afternoon, when Frederic Bayle's "Rose Cycle" was first sung, that Vatchell felt any interest in her work, or any desire to know her better. She had written the lyrics, and as he read his program, something in the wistful loveliness of the verses made him wish that he might hear them

spoken, for even Garki's golden voice and finished diction could not do them justice. Despite the limitation of writing to the score, he recognized the work of a trained hand and an unfettered imagination, and it was with a very definite idea of "getting at her," as he expressed it, that he sought her after the musicale.

As they walked down the street he realized that she was older than he had thought—she might be any age between thirty and forty. She had tired gray eyes with tell-tale lines about them. Everything about her was small and feminine, and he liked her low, full-toned voice and the way her heavy brown hair lay in carven folds around the soft oval of her face.

When they reached the entrance to the apartment hotel where she lived they were in the midst of interesting talk, and she asked him to come up for a cup of tea, and here he was, and, to tell the truth, wishing he were any place else.

The apartment was in the rear of the building and seemed to be composed of three or four rooms huddled together in restless discontent. A grand piano filled one end of the sitting-room with superb disdain. "Here I am," it seemed to say, "cramp yourselves as much as you like, but I'll take all the room I need." It was a narrow, longish room; there were a few good prints on the walls and some interesting looking books on the shelves, but the lighting was so poor that it gave a dreary, almost mean, aspect to the room. There were but two windows, one, on the north, overlooked the bricked courtyard of the apartment, and the

other, through which a sickly gray light filtered with furtive pallor, gave on a whitewashed airshaft. Beside this window stood a small flat-topped desk and revolving bookcase; at the other, in a high-backed rocker, sat Miss Bannister's mother. She was very old, and she had a thin, querulous face which life had bleached and shriveled beyond the semblance of sex.

Miss Bannister presented Vatchell, and before removing her hat, she drew the window shades and snapped on the electric lights; instantly the room became alive, vocal. The rug took on soft old tones, the piano became less insistently aggressive, a great bunch of beautiful red roses stood on the table—only the peevish old woman remained like a false note in the midst of a harmony.

"Now, Mother, I'll leave Mr. Vatchell to you while I go a-brewing."

"It seems to me its pretty early to turn on the lights," was the grumbling response, as the high-backed rocker was hitched to the best vantage point of light and comfort. "How did the musicale go, Mr. Satchel?"

"Vatchell," he corrected. "It went beautifully, but it could scarcely go otherwise with Fred Bayle to write the score, Miss Bannister the lyrics, and Garki to interpret them."

"Well, of course, Mr. Mat—Vatchell, I don't know much about such things, but it seemed to me a great waste of time for Madge to spend days and days on those rhymes. Of course, I wouldn't complain if she *made* anything out of it, but there's no money in this sort of thing, and if there were Bayle would get it; and then *why* be so particular about every word and punctuation mark? You know yourself that a singer might just as well say *la la la* for all anyone hears or cares about the words.

"It isn't as though we hadn't given her a good musical education, for we did, and at considerable sacrifice on my part, too, as practising always did make me nervous, and of course everyone naturally supposed that she would

do something worth while with her music, but she got a few little things accepted by *The Papyrus* and *The Era*, and it completely turned her head, though why I'm sure I can't say; they may be the best literary mediums, but they certainly are poor pay" . . .

Miss Bannister entered with the tea tray, and the stream of her mother's talk was shut off abruptly, as though some one had snapped a faucet.

Vatchell, who was the soul of chivalry, found himself shaken with such swift unreasoning hatred for the old woman that he wanted to refuse the tea at her daughter's hands, to get away as soon as possible.

As he rose to hand Mrs. Bannister her cup, he brushed the bunch of glowing red roses that stood on the table, and this seemed to remind her that she had left something unsaid.

"The roses came while you were away. I suppose Mr. Bayle sent them, although there was no card. Seems as though he might have spared a card; but I looked carefully and shook the tissue paper, and there wasn't a sign of a card or name."

"Aren't they lovely?" was her daughter's reply.

Mrs. Bannister was silent for a moment, then, suspiciously, "Did Bayle send them?"

"No, mother. Is your tea right, Mr. Vatchell?"

"Don't you know who did send them?" the old woman persisted.

There was an almost imperceptible pause, then Miss Bannister replied quietly:

"I bought them."

An angry flush rose to her mother's cheeks; she set her cup down on the table, and sank back in her chair. "Well, I never!" were her words, but what she really said was, "How dared you? I know how much roses cost at this season of the year."

Vatchell's first feeling was a rush of resentment against Bayle for not sending the roses, and in the same instant he wondered what he could say to bridge the painful pause, but Miss Ban-

nister laughed softly and without embarrassment:

"Awfully extravagant, wasn't it, Mother, dear? But you know I never can resist a red rose."

Her mother sniffed with derisive bitterness. "I should think the one you always keep over your desk would be enough, and even that has to be renewed every so often."

Vatchell's eyes followed the grim old eyes to the dim corner of the room occupied by the little desk. On a quaintly carved bracket, fastened high on the wall, stood a dull green vase, holding a single full-blown red rose.

"That wouldn't do to-day. I had to have a real feast. Is your tea right, dear?"

"I don't want it," was the sullen reply.

Vatchell was an artist to his finger tips, full of sensitive, almost womanish intuitions, and the full-blown rose on its high quaintly carved shelf, became the most suggestive thing in the room; he wondered how he had missed it. The corner of the room with the little flat-topped desk and the enshrined rose, seemed to breathe an air of inclusion and peace. And suddenly the tension in the atmosphere was relaxed; he was enjoying himself, was glad that he had come, and wondering how soon he could come again.

* * *

Indeed it was not long before he became the most frequent visitor they had. He listened with at least the appearance of patience to the complaints and tiresome reminiscence of the older woman who seldom effaced herself. She was always snappish and disagreeable to her daughter, whose tact and gentleness were unfailing; although at times Vatchell felt that her manner was too perfect, too exquisite, as though put on to hide a pride that ached but would not rebel.

Occasionally he persuaded her to go with him for a quiet dinner in some nearby restaurant, and then they had long uninterrupted talks about books, music, and interesting people they had

known. He recognized in her an unerring critical faculty, and in the delicate cameo-like quality of her stories he found something very special and precious. She would never have a wide public, but she might easily have a cult, and he used his considerable influence to bear in bringing her work to the attention of influential publishers.

More frequently than he cared to acknowledge, he found himself thinking of her kind, weary, gray eyes; recalling the low, full tones of her voice, or a striking glimpse of her tender profile that had stamped itself on his memory; and, if the truth were told, her sweet tired face, with its reminiscent beauty, the heavy lidded eyes, and the enfolding coils of her soft brown hair rose more poignantly before his vision than her mental characteristics or their similarity of tastes and pursuits.

There were even times when he resented her endeavors and achievement, and, curiously enough, this resentment extended itself to the red rose that always stood on the high shelf over her desk. He suspected that it marked some sentiment in her life. He knew that they were poor, and it often came to him with a sharp pang that she probably denied herself some physical comfort in order that the rose might occupy its dim shrine.

She sometimes remonstrated with him for his prodigal gifts of flowers, fragrant spring blossoms in the middle of winter, spicy carnations, stately lilies, or those rare grotesques, orchids, which she admired but did not love. A fine reticence stayed him from ever offering her red roses.

One morning in late spring Vatchell sat at the breakfast table looking over his mail. Underneath the heap of letters was a thin oblong package, and with the thought that some young writer had sent him his book, hoping for an encouraging word to urge its flight, he drew it out and cut the string. It was a slender volume, modestly bound in dull green cloth. "Not much

of it, thank goodness," was his inward comment. He opened the book and read on the title page, "Rose Sonnets, by Madge Bannister." . . . "Rose Sonnets, by Madge Bannister," he repeated, half-comprehendingly, then in a low, hurt tone, "Why, she never told me."

He sat staring at the card she had written and placed in the book, "To my good friend and kindest critic." . . . So that was all! And he had wished to be so much more.

It was some time before he gathered up his mail and went into the library, and it was some time later before he could bring himself to open the book. He disliked it, as one dislikes the tangible evidence of a barrier that separates one from a coveted territory.

Presently he read, and as he read the critic in him sprang to life. Her stories had always made him think of delicate vignettes painted with infinite care and precision, but in the sonnets he was unconscious of form; they seemed to have sprung spontaneously and without conscious effort into their full-fledged perfection. He turned the leaves quickly, pausing now and then to read a line, a flowing phrase, a whole poem, or musing half tenderly over the one beginning,

"Deep red rose, in your glowing heart"

"They're great! I never dreamed she could do anything like this. Talk about the 'divine fire'—this is the real thing if I ever saw it. There hasn't been anything finer since." . . . His voice trailed away and he sat with veiled, brooding eyes gazing into space. As though smothered by some ruthless hand, the flame he had cherished in his heart seemed to die suddenly. "What a presumptuous fool I've been," he thought bitterly, as he rose and paced the length of the room. "How could I ever hope. . . How did I ever dare?" A restless little pain flickered around his sensitive lips and he picked up the book and read again.

He could scarcely define his sense of loss, of defeat, of—yes, of exposure. He felt that Madge, with her lovely recendite personality was still there just as she had always been; but there was something else. The book had shown her up, and in a way it had shown him up, too; her infinite fineness and superiority, and his lack of it. She possessed a rarity, a choiceness, that set her apart, enshrined her. But one goes to a shrine to worship and pray, and he had not thought to serve her kneeling.

It was late afternoon when Vatchell walked around to the Bannisters' apartment, and as he stepped off the lift he met Mrs. Bannister waiting to go down.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she greeted him a little ungraciously. I was just starting out for a little air. Madge said she'd be right back, but I waited and waited and she isn't here yet. Now I suppose I might as well give up my walk."

"Please don't," Vatchell begged, "I can come again. I am sure you need the air. Let me ring the bell for the lift."

Mrs. Bannister hesitated, then she said fretfully, "No, I'll go back. It doesn't matter about me. . . Still, perhaps you wouldn't mind waiting alone. She ought to be here any minute." And taking his consent for granted, she unlocked the door of their apartment and almost thrust Vatchell inside.

Vatchell looked around the sunless shadowy room, so familiar to him now, with the feeling that hereafter he should not see it so frequently. The grand piano, the books, the pictures, the litter of the table all spoke eloquently to him. "If I had ever detected one funny shabby little weakness in her nature, I might hope, but . . . it was a privilege," he whispered miserably; and emboldened by his sense of renunciation, he walked over to the little desk in the corner of the room and stood for a moment. In all the months

that he had been coming here, he had never invaded this corner of the room; it had seemed to him sanctuary, but to-day he felt that renunciation gave him some privileges.

It wasn't a literary looking desk; it held a book or two, a spindly little plant, a stubby pencil, and a scrap of paper with a few figures sprawling over it. Then he raised his eyes to the high, quaintly carved shelf and the red rose that seemed to look down upon him with proud disdain.

"Deep red rose, in your glowing heart"

he quoted softly, and reaching up his hand, he lifted the vase from the shelf. "What do you mean to her," he thought as he lifted the rose to his face, then he looked at it with startled, curious eyes. He stood for a long time with the vase in his hand, filled with a funny blank sense of bewilderment—almost as though he had been cheated or deceived, then he put it back on its high, dim niche and walked across the room and back, a tender, half-whimsical smile growing slowly on his face. Once again he lifted the vase from the shelf, then he laughed aloud, joyously, triumphantly, as he gave the rose a careless flip with his finger: "Poor little devil!" he exclaimed, "Her rose is cloth!"

He seized his hat, and with careless disregard for thieves, he sprung the latch on the door and without waiting for the lift, he took the steps on a run. . . . In ten minutes he was back, his arms filled with red roses. He stuck them into a big brass bowl, whistling a low happy note without tune or rhythm. As he finished his task, Madge came in.

"You here! Oh, how lovely!" she cried softly as she crossed the room and buried her face in the fragrant blooms. "And they are *real* ones! They make my poor cambric rose look

faded and old," she smiled, glancing at the high, quaintly carved shelf and its familiar burden. But something in Vatchell's face, suddenly gone white, caused her to pause breathlessly.

"Yes, they are real ones," his voice sounded husky and unfamiliar in his own ears. "As . . . as . . . real as . . . you are," he finished incoherently. "I never brought you roses before."

She nodded, as though she had noticed the omission, but her long, shining lashes veiled her eyes and she would not look up, so he stumbled on. "But to-day I brought you not only roses, but everything I have, heart, strength, and devotion." Her eyes were still downcast, and he stood the distance of the table from her, but his voice seemed to touch her, to caress and enfold her with its deep note of tenderness. "I had no intention of saying this to you to-day; I didn't intend to speak; you seemed so remote, so unreal, I . . . I . . . didn't dare to, but," he smiled a twisted enigmatical smile at the cambric rose, "something gave me courage, and I dared."

And as he looked into the tired gray eyes, a little misty now, and the sweet face smiling tremulously at him, his heart began to soar—he knew he had not dared in vain.

And as he held her close, close, there was no thought of unreality nor aloofness of spirit; she was just a dear frail woman whom it was his precious privilege to care for, to protect, and to cherish.

As soon as he would let her speak, she murmured unsteadily: "I'm glad you dared," then shyly, "I wonder what gave you courage. Was it the Rose Sonnets?"

Vatchell was a man of the world, and he knew women, and as his lips brushed the braids of her soft brown hair, he smiled at the rose on the high, carved shelf, and lied softly: "Yes, dear, they gave me courage."



CRYSTAL-GAZING

By Robert Carlton Brown

LOVE is the crystal into which I gaze. My neck muscles never tire with looking. For there I see something always new. Fresh. Pouting, rich, red lips; thin, salmon-colored tight ones. Fire-flies flirting with fans. Angle-worms squirming like oriental dancers. Babies with eyes and lips crinkling in laughter. Mothers cooing over cradles. Fathers sitting on book-keeper's stools, like witches over cauldrons, adding long columns of figures and sometimes mixing into the cold commercial count baby's four shining new teeth or the price of a teddy bear.

I see strong sailors wrecked on coral reefs, lured by siren songs. The sirens,

too, are there, cold, fishy, a bit scaly. I will not love a siren, unless she looks into my eyes.

I see in the vibrant crystal, vampires, harems, lone Methodist missionaries with consciences and tracts, black girls with eyes like hat-pin heads, round stomachs, necklaces and loin cloths. All are my lovers.

Voluptuous vases turning up blushing cheeks to my caress. Good goblets of wine I will fondle and desire. My heart shall leap to claim union with an elusive color. I will win a Whistler nocturne, marry a Japanese print and have love affairs with Boldinis all my life.



QUOTH MAX STIRNER

EVEN if, for the present, I am too weak to make you do my will, I yet remember it against you.

The ideal of democracy: one law, one faith, one god, one rank, one *hat*.

A free people means a people among whom the individual has been robbed of his rights for the common good.

Have you ever seen a spirit? No; but my grandmother used to say that she had. . . . It is because we believe our grandmothers that we believe in the supernatural.

Every State is a despotism, and every citizen is a bondsman. If he was free yesterday and helped to make a new law, he is its slave today.



IT is bad enough to know what we honestly think of others without seeking to find out what they honestly think of us.



A LITTLE CLOUD

By James Joyce

EIGHT years before he had seen his friend off at the North Wall and wished him godspeed. Gallaher had got on. You could tell that at once by his traveled air, his well-cut tweed suit, and fearless accent. Few fellows had talents like his and fewer still could remain unspoiled by such success. Gallaher's heart was in the right place and he had deserved to win. It was something to have a friend like that.

Little Chandler's thoughts ever since lunch time had been of his meeting with Gallaher, of Gallaher's invitation and of the great city London, where Gallaher lived. He was called Little Chandler because, though he was but slightly under the average stature, he gave one the idea of being a little man. His hands were white and small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair, silken hair and moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The half moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of childish white teeth.

As he sat at his desk in the King's Inns he thought what changes those eight years had brought. The friend whom he had known under a shabby and necessitous guise had become a brilliant figure on the London Press. He turned often from his tiresome writing to gaze out of the office window. The glow of a late autumn sunset covered the grass plots and walks. It cast a shower of kindly golden dust on the untidy nurses and decrepit old men who drowsed on the benches; it flickered upon all the moving figures—on the children who ran screaming along the

gravel paths and on everyone who passed through the gardens. He watched the scene and thought of life; and (as always happened when he thought of life) he became sad. A gentle melancholy took possession of him. He felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this being the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him.

He remembered the books of poetry upon his shelves at home. He had bought them in his bachelor days and many an evening, as he sat in the little room off the hall, he had been tempted to take one down from the bookshelf and read out something to his wife. But shyness had always held him back; and so the books had remained on their shelves. At times he repeated lines to himself and this consoled him.

When his hour had struck he stood up and took leave of his desk and of his fellow-clerks punctiliously. He emerged from under the feudal arch of the King's Inns, a neat, modest figure, and walked swiftly down Henrietta Street. The golden sunset was waning and the air had grown sharp. A horde of grimy children populated the street. They stood or ran in the roadway or crawled up the steps before the gaping doors or squatted like mice upon the thresholds. Little Chandler gave them no thought. He picked his way deftly through all that minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roystered. No memory of the past touched him, for his mind was full of a present joy.

He had never been in Corless's but he knew the value of the name. He

knew that people went there after the theater to eat oysters and drink liqueurs; and he had heard that the waiters there spoke French and German. Walking swiftly by at night he had seen cabs drawn up before the door and richly dressed ladies, escorted by cavaliers, alight and enter quickly. They wore noisy dresses and many wraps. Their faces were powdered and they caught up their dresses, when they touched earth, like alarmed Atalantas. He had always passed without turning his head to look. It was his habit to walk swiftly in the street even by day, and whenever he found himself in the city late at night he hurried on his way apprehensively and excitedly. Sometimes, however, he courted the causes of his fear. He chose the darkest and narrowest streets and, as he walked boldly forward, the silence that was spread about his footsteps troubled him; and at times a sound of low, fugitive laughter made him tremble like a leaf.

He turned to the right towards Capel Street. Ignatius Gallaher on the London Press! Who would have thought it possible eight years before? Still, now that he reviewed the past, Little Chandler could remember many signs of future greatness in his friend. People used to say that Ignatius Gallaher was wild. Of course, he did mix with a rakish set of fellows at that time, drank freely and borrowed money on all sides. In the end he had got mixed up in some shady affair, some money transaction: at least, that was one version of his flight. But nobody denied him talent. There was always a certain . . . something in Ignatius Gallaher that impressed you in spite of yourself. Even when he was out at elbows and at his wits' end for money he kept up a bold face. Little Chandler remembered (and the remembrance brought a slight flush of pride to his cheek) one of Ignatius Gallaher's sayings when he was in a tight corner:

"Half time, now, boys," he used to say light-heartedly. "Where's my considering cap?"

That was Ignatius Gallaher all out;

and, damn it, you couldn't but admire him for it.

Little Chandler quickened his pace. For the first time in his life he felt himself superior to the people he passed. For the first time his soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin. As he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the river banks, their old coats covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset and waiting for the first chill of night to bid them arise, shake themselves and begone. He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea. Perhaps Gallaher might be able to get it into some London paper for him. Could he write something original? He was not sure what idea he wished to express, but the thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life within him like an infant hope. He stepped onward bravely.

Every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own sober, inartistic life. A light began to tremble on the horizon of his mind. He was not so old—thirty-two. His temperament might be said to be just at the point of maturity. There were so many different moods and impressions that he wished to express in verse. He felt them within him. He tried to weigh his soul to see if it was a poet's soul. Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy. If he could give expression to it in a book of poems perhaps men would listen. He would never be popular: he saw that. He could not sway the crowd but he might appeal to a little circle of kindred minds. The English critics, perhaps, would recognize him as one of the Celtic school by reason of the melancholy tone of his poems; be-

sides that, he would put in allusions. He began to invent sentences and phrases from the notice which his book would get. "*Mr. Chandler has the gift of easy and graceful verse.*" . . . "*A wistful sadness pervades these poems.*"

. . . "*The Celtic note.*" It was a pity his name was not more Irish-looking. Perhaps it would be better to insert his mother's name before the surname: Thomas Malone Chandler, or better still: T. Malone Chandler. He would speak to Gallaher about it.

He pursued his reverie so ardently that he passed his street and had to turn back. As he came near Corless's his former agitation began to overmaster him and he halted before the door in indecision. Finally he opened the door and entered.

The light and noise of the bar held him at the doorways for a few moments. He looked about him, but his sight was confused by the shining of many red and green wine glasses. The bar seemed to him to be full of people and he felt that the people were observing him curiously. He glanced quickly to right and left (frowning slightly to make his errand appear serious), but when his sight cleared a little he saw that nobody had turned to look at him: and there, sure enough, was Ignatius Gallaher leaning with his back against the counter and his feet planted far apart.

"Hallo, Tommy, old hero, here you are! What is it to be? What will you have? I'm taking whisky: better stuff than we get across the water. Soda? Lithia? No mineral? I'm the same. Spoils the flavor. . . . Here, *garçon*, bring us two halves of malt whisky, like a good fellow. . . . Well, and how have you been pulling along since I saw you last? Dear God, how old we're getting! Do you see any signs of aging in me—eh, what? A little gray and thin on the top—what?"

Ignatius Gallaher took off his hat and displayed a large, closely-cropped head. His face was heavy, pale and clean-shaven. His eyes, which were of bluish slate-color, relieved his unhealthy

pallor and shone out plainly above the vivid orange tie he wore. Between these rival features the lips appeared very long and shapeless and colorless. He bent his head and felt with two sympathetic fingers the thin hair at the crown. Little Chandler shook his head as a denial. Ignatius Gallaher put on his hat again.

"It pulls you down," he said, "Press life. Always hurry and scurry, looking for copy and sometimes not finding it: and then, always to have something new in your stuff. Damn proofs and printers, I say, for a few days. I'm deuced glad, I can tell you, to get back to the old country. Does a fellow good, a bit of a holiday. I feel a ton better since I landed again in dear dirty Dublin. . . . Here you are, Tommy. Water? Say when."

Little Chandler allowed his whisky to be very much diluted.

"You don't know what's good for you, my boy," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I drink mine neat."

"I drink very little as a rule," said Little Chandler modestly. "An odd half-one or so when I meet any of the old crowd: that's all."

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, cheerfully, "here's to us and to old times and old acquaintance."

They clinked glasses and drank the toast.

"I met some of the old gang to-day," said Ignatius Gallaher. O'Hara seems to be in a bad way. What's he doing?"

"Nothing," said Little Chandler. "He's gone to the dogs."

"But Hogan has a good sit, hasn't he?"

"Yes; he's in the Land Commission."

"I met him one night in London and he seemed to be very flush. . . . Poor O'Hara! Booze, I suppose?"

"Other things, too," said Little Chandler shortly.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"Tommy," he said, "I see you haven't changed an atom. You're the very same serious person that used to lecture me on Sunday mornings when I had a sore head and a fur on my tongue. You'd

want to knock about a bit in the world. Have you never been anywhere, even for a trip?"

"I've been to the Isle of Man," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"The Isle of Man!" he said. "Go to London or Paris: Paris, for choice. That'd do you good."

"Have you seen Paris?"

"I should think I have! I've knocked about there a little."

"And is it really so beautiful as they say?" asked Little Chandler.

He sipped a little of his drink while Ignatius Gallaher finished his boldly.

"Beautiful?" said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on the flavor of his drink. "It's not so beautiful, you know. Of course, it is beautiful. . . . But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement. . . ."

Little Chandler finished his whisky and, after some trouble, succeeded in catching the barman's eye. He ordered the same again.

"I've been to the Moulin Rouge," Ignatius Gallaher continued when the barman had removed their glasses, "and I've been to all the Bohemian cafés. Hot stuff! Not for a pious chap like you, Tommy."

Little Chandler said nothing until the barman returned with the two glasses: then he touched his friend's glass lightly and reciprocated the former toast. He was beginning to feel somewhat disillusioned. Gallaher's accent and way of expressing himself did not please him. There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not observed before. But perhaps it was only the result of living in London amid the bustle and competition of the Press. The old personal charm was still there under this new gaudy manner. And, after all, Gallaher had lived, he had seen the world. Little Chandler looked at his friend enviously.

"Everything in Paris is gay," said Ignatius Gallaher. "They believe in enjoying life—and don't you think they're right? If you want to enjoy

yourself properly you must go to Paris. And, mind you, they've a great feeling for the Irish there. When they heard I was from Ireland they were ready to eat me, man."

Little Chandler took four or five sips from his glass.

"Tell me," he said, "is it true that Paris is so . . . immoral as they say?"

Ignatius Gallaher made a catholic gesture with his right arm.

"Every place is immoral," he said. "Of course you do find spicy bits in Paris. Go to one of the students' balls, for instance. That's lively, if you like, when the *cocottes* begin to let themselves loose. You know what they are, I suppose?"

"I've heard of them," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher drank off his whisky and shook his head.

"Ah," he said, "you may say what you like. There's no woman like the Parisienne—for style, for go."

"Then it is an immoral city," said Little Chandler, with timid insistence—"I mean, compared with London or Dublin?"

"London!" said Ignatius Gallaher. "It's six of one and half a dozen of the other. You ask Hogan, my boy. I showed him a bit about London when he was over there. He'd open your eye. . . . I say, Tommy, don't make punch of that whisky: liquor up."

"No, really. . . ."

"Oh, come on, another one won't do you any harm. What is it? The same again, I suppose?"

"Well . . . all right."

"François, the same again. . . . Will you smoke, Tommy?"

Ignatius Gallaher produced his cigar-case. The two friends lit their cigars and puffed at them in silence until their drinks were served.

"I'll tell you my opinion," said Ignatius Gallaher, emerging after some time from the clouds of smoke in which he had taken refuge, "it's a rum world. Talk of immorality! I've heard of cases—what am I saying?—I've known them: cases of . . . immorality. . . ."

Ignatius Gallaher puffed thoughtfully at his cigar and then, in a calm historian's tone, he proceeded to sketch for his friend some pictures of the corruption which was rife abroad. He summarized the vices of many capitals and seemed inclined to award the palm to Berlin. Some things he could not vouch for (his friends had told him), but of others he had had personal experience. He spared neither rank nor caste. He revealed many of the secrets of religious houses on the Continent and described some of the practises which were fashionable in high society and ended by telling, with details, a story about an English duchess—a story which he knew to be true. Little Chandler was astonished.

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "here we are in old jog-along Dublin where nothing is known of such things."

"How dull you must find it," said Little Chandler, "after all the other places you've seen!"

"Well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "it's a relaxation to come over here, you know. And, after all, it's the old country, as they say, isn't it? You can't help having a certain feeling for it. That's human nature. . . . But tell me something about yourself. Hogan told me you had . . . tasted the joys of connubial bliss. Two years ago, wasn't it?"

Little Chandler blushed and smiled.

"Yes," he said. "I was married last May twelve months."

"I hope it's not too late in the day to offer my best wishes," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I didn't know your address or I'd have done so at the time."

He extended his hand, which Little Chandler took.

"Well, Tommy," he said, "I wish you and yours every joy in life, old chap, and tons of money, and may you never die till I shoot you. And that's the wish of a sincere friend, an old friend. You know that?"

"I know that," said Little Chandler.

"Any youngsters?" said Ignatius Gallaher.

Little Chandler blushed again.

"We have one child," he said.

"Son or daughter?"

"A little boy."

Ignatius Gallaher slapped his friend sonorously on the back.

"Bravo," he said, "I wouldn't doubt you, Tommy."

Little Chandler smiled, looked confusedly at his glass and bit his lower lip with three childishly white front teeth.

"I hope you'll spend an evening with us," he said, "before you go back. My wife will be delighted to meet you. We can have a little music and—"

"Thanks awfully, old chap," said Ignatius Gallaher, "I'm sorry we didn't meet earlier. But I must leave tomorrow night."

"Tonight, perhaps . . . ?"

"I'm awfully sorry, old man. You see I'm over here with another fellow, clever young chap he is, too, and we arranged to go to a little card party. Only for that. . . ."

"Oh, in that case. . . ."

"But who knows?" said Ignatius Gallaher considerately. "Next year I may take a little skip over here now that I've broken the ice. It's only a pleasure deferred."

"Very well," said Little Chandler, "the next time you come we must have an evening together. That's agreed now, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's agreed," said Ignatius Gallaher. "Next year if I come, *parole d'honneur*."

"And to clinch the bargain," said Little Chandler, "we'll just have one more now."

Ignatius Gallaher took out a large gold watch and looked at it.

"Is it to be the last?" he said. "Because you know, I have an a.p."

"Oh, yes, positively," said Little Chandler.

"Very well, then," said Ignatius Gallaher, "let us have another one as a *deoc an doruis*—that's good vernacular for a small whisky, I believe."

Little Chandler ordered the drinks. The blush which had risen to his face a few moments before was establishing

itself. A trifle made him blush at any time; and now he felt warm and excited. Three small whiskies had gone to his head and Gallaher's strong cigar had confused his mind, for he was a delicate and abstinent person. The adventure of meeting Gallaher after eight years, of finding himself with Gallaher in Corless's surrounded by lights and noise, of listening to Gallaher's stories and of sharing for a brief space Gallaher's vagrant and triumphant life, upset the equipoise of his sensitive nature. He felt acutely the contrast between his own life and his friend's, and it seemed to him unjust. Gallaher was his inferior in birth and education. He was sure that he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do, something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the chance. What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity! He wished to vindicate himself in some way, to assert his manhood. He saw behind Gallaher's refusal of his invitation. Gallaher was only patronizing him by his friendliness just as he was patronizing Ireland by his visit.

The barman brought their drinks. Little Chandler pushed one glass towards his friend and took up the other boldly.

"Who knows?" he said, as they lifted their glasses. "When you come next year I may have the pleasure of wishing long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Gallaher."

Ignatius Gallaher, in the act of drinking, closed one eye expressively over the rim of his glass. When he had drunk he smacked his lips decisively, set down his glass and said:

"No blooming fear of that, my boy. I'm going to have my fling first and see a bit of life and the world before I put my head in the sack—if I ever do."

"Some day you will," said Little Chandler calmly.

Ignatius Gallaher turned his orange tie and slate-blue eyes full upon his friend.

"You think so?" he said.

"You'll put your head in the sack,"

repeated Little Chandler stoutly, "like everyone else if you can find the girl."

He had slightly emphasized his tone and he was aware that he had betrayed himself; but, though the color had heightened in his cheek, he did not flinch from his friend's gaze. Ignatius Gallaher watched him for a few moments and then said:

"If ever it occurs, you may bet your bottom dollar there'll be no mooning and spooning about it. I mean to marry money. She'll have a good fat account at the bank or she won't do for me."

Little Chandler shook his head.

"Why, man alive," said Ignatius Gallaher, vehemently, "do you know what it is? I've only to say the word and tomorrow I can have the woman and the cash. You don't believe it? Well, I know it. There are hundreds—what am I saying?—thousands of rich Germans and Jews, rotten with money, that'd only be too glad. . . . You wait a while, my boy. See if I don't play my cards properly. When I go about a thing I mean business, I tell you. You just wait."

He tossed his glass to his mouth, finished his drink and laughed loudly. Then he looked thoughtfully before him and said in a calmer tone:

"But I'm in no hurry. They can wait. I don't fancy tying myself up to one woman, you know."

He imitated with his mouth the act of tasting and made a wry face.

"Must get a bit stale, I should think," he said.

Little Chandler sat in the room off the hall, holding a child in his arms. To save money they kept no servant but Annie's young sister Monica came for an hour or so in the morning and an hour or so in the evening to help. But Monica had gone home long ago. It was a quarter to nine. Little Chandler had come home late for tea and, moreover, he had forgotten to bring Annie home the parcel of coffee from Bewley's. Of course she was in a bad humor and gave him short answers. She

said she would do without any tea, but when it came near the time at which the shop at the corner closed she decided to go out herself for a quarter of a pound of tea and two pounds of sugar. She put the sleeping child deftly in his arms and said:

"Here. Don't waken him."

A little lamp with a white china shade stood upon the table and its light fell over a photograph which was enclosed in a frame of crumpled horn. It was Annie's photograph. Little Chandler looked at it, pausing at the thin, tight lips. She wore the pale blue summer blouse which he had brought her home as a present one Saturday. It had cost him ten and elevenpence; but what an agony of nervousness it had cost him! How he had suffered that day, waiting at the shop door until the shop was empty, standing at the counter and trying to appear at his ease while the girl piled ladies' blouses before him, paying at the desk and forgetting to take up the odd penny of his change, being called back by the cashier, and, finally, striving to hide his blushes as he left the shop by examining the parcel to see if it was securely tied. When he brought the blouse home Annie kissed him and said it was very pretty and stylish; but when she heard the price she threw the blouse on the table and said it was a regular swindle to charge ten and elevenpence for it. At first she wanted to take it back, but when she tried it on she was delighted with it, especially with the make of the sleeves, and kissed him and said he was very good to think of her.

Hm! . . .

He looked coldly into the eyes of the photograph and they answered coldly. Certainly they were pretty and the face itself was pretty. But he found something mean in it. Why was it so unconscious and lady-like? The composure of the eyes irritated him. They repelled him and defied him: there was no passion in them, no rapture. He thought of what Gallaher had said about rich Jewesses. Those dark Oriental eyes, he thought, how full they are of

passion, of voluptuous longing! . . . Why had he married the eyes in the photograph?

He caught himself up at the question and glanced nervously round the room. He found something mean in the pretty furniture which he had bought for his house on the hire system. Annie had chosen it herself and it reminded him of her. It, too, was prim and pretty. A dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not escape from his little house? Was it too late for him to try to live bravely like Gallaher? Could he go to London? There was the furniture still to be paid for. If he could only write a book and get it published that might open the way for him.

A volume of Byron's poems lay before him on the table. He opened it cautiously with his left hand lest he should waken the child and began to read the first poem in the book:

*"Hushed are the winds and still the
evening gloom,
Not e'en a Zephyr wanders through
the grove,
Whilst I return to view my Margaret's
tomb
And scatter flowers on the dust I
love."*

He paused. He felt the rhythm of the verse about him in the room. How melancholy it was! Could he, too, write like that, express the melancholy of his soul in verse? There were so many things he wanted to describe: his sensation of a few hours before on Grattan Bridge, for example. If he could get back again into that mood. . . .

The child awoke and began to cry. He turned from the page and tried to hush it: but it would not be hushed. He began to rock it to and fro in his arms but its wailing cry grew keener. He rocked it faster while his eyes began to read the second stanza:

*"Within this narrow cell reclines her
clay,
That clay where once . . ."*

It was useless. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything. The wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life. His arms trembled with anger and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted:

"Stop!"

The child stopped for an instant, had a spasm of fright and began to scream. He jumped up from his chair and walked hastily up and down the room with the child in his arms. It began to sob piteously, losing its breath for four or five seconds, and then bursting out anew. The thin walls of the room echoed the sound. He tried to soothe it but it sobbed more convulsively. He looked at the contracted and quivering face of the child and began to be alarmed. He counted seven sobs without a break between them and caught the child to his breast in fright. If it died! . . .

The door was burst open and a young woman ran in, panting.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried.

The child, hearing its mother's voice, broke out into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"It's nothing, Annie . . . it's nothing. . . . He began to cry. . . ."

She flung her parcels on the floor and snatched the child from him.

"What have you done to him?" she cried, glaring into his face.

Little Chandler sustained for one moment the gaze of her eyes and his heart closed together as he met the hatred in them. He began to stammer:

"It's nothing. . . . He . . . he began to cry. . . . I couldn't . . . I didn't do anything. . . . What?"

Giving no heed to him she began to walk up and down the room, clasping the child tightly in her arms and murmuring:

"My little man! My little mannie! Was 'ou frightened, love? . . . There now, love! There now! . . . Mamma's little lamb of the world! . . . There now!"

Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame and he stood back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the child's sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to his eyes.

THE NEEDY POET INVOKETH THE GODS

By John McClure

MAy all the hidden deities
Of fair luck befriend
My toe that peepeth coyly
From my shoe's end!

My toe that peepeth coyly
Like a wee maid
Void of worldly wickedness
And somewhat afraid,

My toe that peepeth coyly
Fearing sore to get,
Scratched upon a cobblestone
Or damnably wet.

May all the hidden deities
Of fair luck befriend
My toe that peepeth coyly
From my shoe's end!

THE BARBER-SHOP—AN APPRECIATION

By Thomas McMorrow

THE barber-shop, in its larger aspect, is one of man's refuges from woman, sharing that honor with the saloon and the smoking-car. Man is under a necessity of escaping from woman, as imperious and as constant as the necessity which drives him to her. He fears her and walks in her presence gingerly. And he loves to gather with his own in the barber-shop to talk seditiously about her and plot to circumvent and overthrow her, and to tell heartening tales of crafty men who have overcome her in times past. He casts off his collar, woman's yoke, and gloats over the *Police Gazette*.

She looks upon these secret gatherings with tautened eyebrows. What treasons and mutinies does he plot against her there? She has taught the brute gallantry till it is his simple joy to dress her in purple while he wears sack suits, but she knows too well that he tends always to revert to type. He envies her smooth cheeks, her perfume, her delicate coloring, and submits himself to the degrading manipulations of the barber that he may be remotely like her; she suspects that he whispers meanwhile horrible blasphemies against her and sniggers fearfully at her in this masculine fastness.

The manicure? The manicure has been corrupted and has gone over to the enemy. She is now man's friend. At first she was regarded with fear and hate; hard-bearded men growled indignantly, "What is that *woman* doing here?" Now she leans on their shoulders and takes their great, coarse hands in hers, and they rise eagerly from the

barber-chair and go with her to her little table. They hold whispered conferences with her, giggling over the little idiocies of their dread mistress and repaying the shameful treachery with extravagant tips. The manicure, ladies, is a traitor.

Thus away from woman, and entrenched in the barber-shop, men fall readily to one level of brutality. Woman is an aristocrat, a creator and conservator of social distinctions. No man of himself thinks he is better than another man, or cares to be—proper pride is forced on man by his women. While under their eyes he has social rank. But in the barber-shop he sheds relievedly his distinctive collar, coat and cravat. He is swaddled undignifiedly in a helpless position, and the barber, who is rarely a person of consequence outside his specialty, does other indignities to him, thrusting his thumb into his mouth and foisting upon him discourses upon politics, baseball and the European war, considered from the view-point of nobody in particular. The least struggle or insistence upon the woman-made fetish of personal privacy is paid for in blood. Next! What's your number?

The barber-shop is thus a cradle of democracy, and the barber's thumb is not less than a pillar of the republic. Woman hates democracy. She insists upon her servants crooking the pregnant hinges of the knee, though to do so is not written in their contract. She will not abide a servant who stands upon the letter of his contract of employment—she likes his cheek! She

watches that her men-folk do not forget that between them, too, and the lower orders a great gulf is fixed. The barber's thumb is thrust into that gulf—a proletarian digit which the victim would not shake brings home to him thus his common humanity.

You remember that barber story in *Epicutis?* Always leaves them laughing!

Hyperion was a barber, as, of course, you know, in ancient Rome. He had shed so much blood in his time that he decided he had missed his calling. Accordingly he became a gladiator, and upon one occasion, we are told, while he was in the arena being eaten by Numidian lions, with the hilarious approval of his late patrons, a satyr whom he had often shaved accosted him from a choice seat by the ringside and re-

quired of him "the identity of the person who had ever told Hyperion that he could slay lions." "Yah!" cried Hyperion from the lion's mouth derisively. "You paid to watch me!"*

The barber-shop is man's last ditch. The smoking-car? Pish, woman smokes. She drinks—yes! She has a club and has acquired a "Ladies' Day" in yours. One by one she has mastered your poor little pretenses, and the day she storms the barber-shop your star will set forever.

**Hyperion to a Satyr.—This sally is ascribed by some commentators to the lion, by force of the words "he cried from the lion's mouth," and this view is commended to the attention of the thoughtful reader. But the rendering in the text, it is submitted, has the weight of authority.—AUTHOR.*

THE WHITE BIRDS

By Orrick Johns

THE white birds of your bosom
Flutter against my lips,
Like falling leaves your tears
Cover me with your love.

The heart of your eyes like a pearl
Sleeps in the deepest seas,
But your laugh goes skyward, flying,
As a gull that takes the spray.

Oh, I have come and found you,
Dark as the night, I have come,
Like the scarlet sun at dawn,
Alone and found you at last.

And over me all your hair
You have let loose like a wind,
Scented with flowers and salt,
And wet with the mist of tears.

And the white birds of your bosom
Flutter against my lips—
Ah, but too soon you will leave me,
And the white birds take their flight.

And my lips shall close on the wind,
And the desert shall press my knees,
And the gulls that call from the sea,
Spray-drenched, shall laugh no more.

LA LETTRE

By Arnaud de Laporte

JULIETTE, fit gravement le père Ledru en mettant son képi avant de sortir. Juliette, écoute-moi, mon enfant, j'ai à te parler.

Et tout en bourrant sa pipe, le vieux facteur fronçait les sourcils l'air préoccupé.

Il cherchait à se donner une figure sévère le pauvre homme pour gronder sa grande fille.

Elle avait dix-huit ans Juliette et elle était jolie la matinée, avec ses yeux bleus à la fois moqueurs et mélancoliques.

Petite, continua le père. Ledru en se prenant la tête dans les mains, ton histoire avec Monsieur Jacques commence à se savoir dans le pays. Hier, il t'a reconduite jusqu'ici.

Ca ne peut pas durer. Je ne t'en avais jamais tracassée parce que je ne croyais pas que ça en vaille le peine.

. . . Mais il paraît que c'est sérieux.

Oui c'était sérieux! La Pauvre enfant sans y prendre garde s'était éprise de Jacques Carlier, un avocat qui venait passer tous les ans ses vacances dans une petite propriété aux environs, chez son oncle conseiller général de l'endroit.

Né dans le pays, lui aussi, ils avaient tous les deux fait rapidement connaissance, et maintenant ils se voyaient chaque jour, en cachette.

—Alors, Juliette, c'est bien vrai, tu l'aimes, fit le malheureux père, la voix étranglée, tu l'aimes, . . . et lui, il se moque de toi . . . sans doute.

—Oh! père, s'écria la jeune fille.

—Hélas, c'est bien probable, comment veux-tu qu'il te prenne au sérieux, tu n'as rien. . . Que ta jeunesse et tes grands yeux. . . Si jolie soit elle, un avocat ne s'embarasse pas de la fille d'un paysan.

Sur ces mots le vieux facteur, se leva tristement ne se sentant pas la force d'en dire davantage.

Il l'aimait tant, lui, sa Juliette, qu'il ne pouvait se faire à l'idée de la quitter un jour! Il s'était pourtant résigné à la pensée qu'un autre viendrait lui ravir une part de ce jeune cœur, lui prendre un peu de son affection, mais il voulait que son enfant restât honnête, et il lutterait jusqu'au bout pour la défendre.

Avant de gagner la porte, le père Ledru jeta encore un regard vers sa fille, mais Juliette les yeux baissés semblait fuir cette muette interrogation.

—C'est bien vrai, elle l'aime, gémit-il, et le cœur serré, il se dirigeait vers le bureau de poste.

La receveuse lui remit plusieurs lettres, dont il relut les adresses, les unes après les autres, les classant suivant son habitude, dans l'ordre de sa tournée.

Soudain ses traits se décomposèrent, il venait d'apercevoir sur une enveloppe

Monsieur Jacques Carlier
avocat

Au domaine du Grand Puits.

C'était l'écriture fine et appliquée de Juliette.

Ainsi elle osait correspondre ouvertement avec lui.

Les doigts tremblants, il saisit le paquet de lettres et le glissa dans sa sacoche.

Dehors, il allait titubant comme un homme ivre, si bien que des femmes le regardèrent en chuchotant.

—Voilà, le père Ledru en ribottes! Mais lui ne les entendit pas. Le soleil brûlant lui desséchait la

gorge, une oppression inaccoutumée l'étouffait.

Comme elle pesait lourd à ses pauvres épaules cettre lettre maudite !

—Non, non, je ne la porterai pas, murmurait le pauvre vieux, je vais l'anéantir. . . . Je ne veux pas. . . .

Il était tellement ému que ses pieds trébuchaien sur les cailloux, ses jambes se dérobaient sous lui, il dut s'arrêter.

—Oui . . . mais, reprit-il, il y a l'estampille. . . . Rien à faire . . . mon devoir . . . j'ai prêté serment.

Péniblement il continua sa route.

Bientôt il aperçut le petit chalet aux volets roux où habitait Jacques.

Brutalement de son bâton il frappa la porte, oubliant de tirer la sonnette.

Comme il attendait les yeux hagards, les oreilles bourdonnantes, il s'appuya au mur pour ne pas tomber.

Le son d'une voix aimable le rappela à la réalité.

—Eh bien, mon père Ledru, ça va la santé.

C'était monsieur Carlier, le conseiller général, qui venait d'ouvrir.

A cette vue sans dire un mot, le facteur s'écroula comme une masse.

Monsieur Carlier s'empressa, et fit entrer le pauvre vieux qui revint vite à lui.

—C'est la chaleur qui vous aura joué ce vilain tour, dit-il en lui frottant les tempes avec du vinaigre.

Le facteur fit "non" de la tête et tirant machinalement la lettre de sa sacoche, il la lui tendit.

—C'est pour mon neveu, répartit le conseiller général, justement il vient de rentrer. . . . Jacques, cria-t-il, voilà une lettre pour toi.

Le jeune homme accourut ; mais en apercevant le facteur, il eût un sursaut.

—Eh bien, fit monsieur Carlier, prends ! . . .

L'avocat décacheta fébrilement l'enveloppe et parcourut la missive.

Un silence lourd pesa.

Devant l'attitude bizarre des deux hommes, le conseiller reprit aussitôt la parole et s'adressant à son neveu.

—Allons, qu'est-ce qu'il y a, articula-t-il brièvement. . . . Une mauvaise

nouvelle, montre moi ça. . . . Je pourrai peut-être te venir en aide.

A son tour il prit connaissance de la lettre qu'il rendit bientôt au jeune homme, pendant que le père Ledru murmurait :

—Je comprends bien, vous vous ennuiez à la campagne, vous vouliez une distraction . . . et la fille d'un pauvre diable de facteur rural était bien bonne pour la circonstance. . . . Elle est assez jolie pour vous plaire.

—Juliette n'est pas ma maîtresse s'cria Jacques mortifié.

Monsieur Carlier le regarda sévement.

—Alors pourquoi continuer cette amusette. . . . On ne joue pas avec le cœur d'une jeune fille.

Et comme son neveu effondré ne soufflait mot il continua :

—Tu as l'âge de peser tes actes, tu es orphelin et libre, que vas tu répondre à cette petite ? . . .

Le père Ledru tresaillit se demandant avec anxiété à quoi aboutirait cette discussion.

—Voyons, Jacques, peux-tu dire : "J'aime vraiment Juliette, elle sera ma femme." Allons mon ami il faut rompre ou bien.

—Ou bien ? . . .

—La hausser jusqu'à toi ! . . .

—Oh ! Juliette, ma petite Juliette, murmura le jeune homme, que ne ferais-je pas pour ton bonheur.

—J'attends la réponse, prononça le père Ledru redevenu très maître de lui.

—Je vais vous la donner, fit le Conseiller Général, Jacques n'a pas à rougir de votre fille.

D'une écriture fine et rapide, il traça quelques mots qu'il glissa sous enveloppe.

—Tâche de la rendre heureuse cette enfant.

—Oh ! mon oncle, elle est si douce et si bonne que se sera bien facile je vous assure.

Le vieux faceteur écoutait agréablement surpris, et tout en s'essuyant les yeux d'un revers de main, il se disposait à prendre congé.

—Vous n'êtes pas encore assez bien

pour faire la route tout seul, mon neveu vous accompagnera pour porter la réponse.

—Oui, oui, je suis à vous dans un moment, répondit le jeune homme qui se hâta vers sa chambre.

Quelques instants après ils s'en allaient tous deux sous l'ardeur du soleil de midi.

Quand ils arrivèrent au village, le vieux entra le premier.

—J'ai porté ta lettre, fit-il à Juliette qui l'attendait anxieuse.

Atterrée la jeune fille restait muette.

—Et il y a une réponse, murmura le père Ledru en désignant le seuil de la porte.

Il y en a même deux, fit Jacques en se précipitant vers Juliette. . . . Tiens, ma douce chérie, lui murmura-t-il en lui donnant un écrin dont le satin jauni par le temps retenait une bague ornée de brillants et de perles fines. Prends-en bien soin, mon aimée, c'est

la bague de fiançailles de ma mère, je suis sûr qu'elle nous portera bonheur.

Comme la jeune fille trop émue ne pouvait articuler une parole, l'avocat lui remit alors la lettre du Conseiller Général.

Deuxième réponse, dit-il, celle de mon oncle.

Juliette ouvrit aussitôt l'enveloppe et d'une voix tremblante d'émotion lu ce qui suit :

"Au moment où vous lirez ces lignes, mon grand diable de neveu viendra de vous offrir son nom.—J'approuve de tout cœur.—Je profite du peu de temps qui vous reste à vous appeler Juliette Ledru pour vous faire reconnaître, par mon Notaire, à ce nom que vous quitterez bientôt, la somme de vingt mille francs, cadeau de noces d'un vieil oncle à sa future nièce."

Profondément troublé le père Ledru ouvrit bien grand ses deux bras.

—Et maintenant, ma petite, viens embrasser ton vieux bonhomme de père.



THE POET'S SHIFT

By Ivan Swift

I SAW them there behind the glass—
Red rose, sweet-pea and violet,
Lily and pink and mignonette—
Persuading me; but I must pass.

What would she give if she could know
It hurt my heart to pass them so?—
When she loves rose and mignonette
And dotes upon the violet!

What would I give if these could grow
Along the wayside as I pass—
And not behind a window-glass
For profit's sake and idle show!

But summer comes and some day yet
We'll gather worlds of mignonette,
Where flowers are free and summers long!
Till then my love must live in song!

QUARRY

By Van H. Cartmell, Jr.

HE wore a soft black hat, a satiny appearing coat, well-worn shoes, and a worried air. He had a tangly little excuse for a beard, and very heavy eyebrows which bumped into each other in the middle. He walked across the floor of the gallery with his head down, intent on his course. I was idle and interested; I followed him. "Here," I thought, "is a true art lover; he has chosen one picture from among these thousands to be especially cherished and revered. His coat is worn smooth by the wooden seats on which he has sat to gaze upon it, and his boots are worn through by these tile floors. He disregards all these massive paintings; what a work of art it must be!" Through

gallery after gallery he led me, upstairs and down, glancing ever and anon to the right and left, but never once raising his eyes to the level of the pictures. Now he seemed to have lost his way. He stopped and looked about perplexedly and then set off at a tangent. Finally he turned a corner at the end of a long corridor and I saw his eye light up and his pace quicken. He had found it! Eagerly I raced after him. He was hurrying down a long gallery replete with pictures. When he reached the end I had almost caught him. He glanced about him, hesitating for a second, and then with a little exclamation of delight hastened over to one corner, seized his umbrella, and departed.



FOR the plain women there is one consolation: she can at least have friends.



ANY fool can find fault. What is more, all fools keep on doing it.



MARRIAGE is not always a failure. Sometimes it is only a temporary embarrassment.



A GIRL in the hammock is worth two in the polling-booth.



A GIRL never screams at the second kiss.

A PRETTY GIRL AND SOME LESS IMPORTANT DRAMA

By George Jean Nathan

I HAVE thought the matter over very carefully, very patiently, and have endeavored properly to convince myself that I am all wrong, yet I cannot but stick to the conclusion that the most important and significant theatrical event of the last month was an eighteen-year-old girl with eyes as blue as William Winter contemplating the modern drama, hair golden as Pilsner and legs slender as a farce by Sacha Guitry, who, one recent evening at quarter after nine, ran out upon the stage of the Forty-fourth Street Theater and, by the sheer force of her prettiness, caused my highly respected and otherwise dignified colleague, Mr. Reamer of the *Sun*, nearly to fall out of his seat.

The girl was a dancer and, as a dancer, neither better nor worse than scores of limber ladies currently eloquent in hosiery. The girl, further, was not called upon to speak so much as a single word. The girl, further still, was not called upon to warble so much as a single note. And yet—

As I say, I must believe that any young woman who, like this young woman, can for something under two hours, and doing nothing, stagger and set a-thrill a sophisticated gang of first-nighters with her good looks, is a theatrical movement seriously to be considered. Certainly if mere daubed canvas scenery à la Craig, Reinhardt, Barker, et al., may be regarded formally as a matter of moment and materialness in its application to an improved stage; certainly if a mere switching of footlights from one position to another,

à la Barker, Belasco, et al., or an alteration of the usual shape of a stage may be treated with respectful consideration for the potential tonic qualities vested in such a change, then just as certainly the advent of a girl whose facial scenery and light of eyes and unusual shape are sufficiently improved to make an audience forget an American music show libretto typically adapted by Messrs. Edgar Smith and Harold Atteridge, is an occasion for the attention of the profound, scholarly and authentic critic.

I will gracefully refrain from proceeding here into the conventional nonsense having to do with beauty being in itself an art. Beauty has utterly nothing to do with the present issue. The American stage bears the reputation for any number of merely beautiful women—Maxine Elliott, for example, Jane Cowl and Elsie Ferguson—but none of these strictly comely ladies has ever contrived to hold an audience with her *face* alone. Who, for all these creatures' rigorous pulchritude, has not submitted to the caresses of the Sandman when the plays presenting these classic creatures have been plays of passive quality—"The Chaperone," say, or "The Gamblers," or "The Strange Woman"? Beauty may charm the eye for a variable period, but it does not, charming, hold the eye as simple prettiness holds it. Prettiness is to beauty as one plate of onion soup is to two plates of onion soup. The one plate tickles the palate, teases, provokes in its fugitivity a pleasurable reverie, imparts in passing

a dream of taste and rosemary—it lures, it touches, and is gone. On the other hand, consider the two plates. Satiety, a heavy flavour of something at the beginning light and toothsome, an overdose, a glut, a choked feeling, too much—the duet lures, touches and, alas, stays. And so it is with beauty. . . . The old, old fable, forsooth, of the little cottage and the marble palace.

It is a difficult thing, believe me, to find in these late days a merely pretty girl. Girls are, on the one hand, either pie-faced or on the other, cosmetically, gothically beautiful. And nothing is more uninteresting than a beautiful woman. César, you remember, had one and sneaked out o' nights to hold hands with a neighbor's girl who was just pretty. Napoleon had one and we know what happened to the old dog when at last he laid eyes on the just pretty girl in Egypt. It has always been so and it probably always will be. And so I repeat that if the fact that the shape of Cleopatra's nose changed the history of the world is worthy of notice, so then too may be the fact that the shape of Frances Pritchard's legs seems to have changed the history of the adapted foreign music show.

It is now some ten years that I have been setting down my usually unimportant, if always entertaining, lack of opinions on the theater of the period. And in that space of service my eye has traveled over the footlights countless times to countless baggages of minstrelsy, some ugly as sin found out, some as symmetrically beautiful as the tall column in Trafalgar Square. But how many simply pretty girls in all this long time has the nomad eye captured? How many faces like the fleeting musical prose of Lord Dunsany as opposed, on this side, to the tawdry prose of Henri Bordeaux, on that, to the cold majesty of the prose of Thomas Hardy? How many girls with figures like the metaphors of Anatole France? Maybe as many as two.

Whether or not this young person of whom I am here, with a somewhat ridiculous sincerity, writing, fits into

this aristocratic catalogue, I will confess to not knowing accurately. The chairs which the Messrs. Shubert assign to receive my person in the Forty-fourth Street Theater, as Harris Merton Lyon once observed, are too far away from the stage to permit me to see clearly and too near to permit me to sleep peacefully. Besides, my eyes are not as good as they used to be. So maybe the unruly imagination with which I am cursed—aided and abetted on this occasion by several possibly indiscreet liquors—has dramatized the young person with too superior a fancy. Maybe, after all, it is only my own beautifying imagination I am extolling.

And yet, as I made out the flapper from afar, she seemed to impress my ancient vision as all I have so absurdly claimed for her . . . the Champs Elysées on a warm May afternoon . . . a snooze along the drowsy still green roadside out of Shanghai . . . a string of crisp pretzels and a lusty salt-sprinkled radish in the courtyard of the Hofbräuhaus at Munich . . . apple-blossoms and Sauterne . . . Saint-Saëns fantaisie for harp and violin . . . the veranda of the country club, a julep, and the latest copy of *THE SMART SET*.

(*Apologia: In Spring, a young man's thoughts lightly turn fancy.*)

The appearance of this personable petticoat is entitled "The Peasant Girl," being known overseas as "Polenblut." The music, of one Oskar Nedbal, is vastly above the average, but this error has been duly corrected by interpolating into the score several sonatas of Broadway manufacture. Nevertheless, the pretty girl to whom, unless memory errs, I believe I have referred, is amply persuasive in causing one to forget such barbershop incursions; in causing one to be impervious to a libretto in which the usual lady masquerades as the usual lowly maid in order to woo and win the usual haughty baritone of her heart; in causing one to enjoy the evening and, finally, in causing one subsequently upon getting home to lie like the devil to one's wife that what really

pleased one about the show was the fine singing of Emma Trentini.

Cooling off a bit, we presently move to a survey of a band of amateurs marking themselves The Washington Square Players and tenanting the Bandbox Theater. From the great number of organizations more or less like this which are spreading over the land, it would appear that everybody is in the theatrical business but the theatrical managers. Which, when we consider the circumstance that it has remained for a squad of amateurs in a remote amusement chamber named The Neighborhood Playhouse at length to introduce the work of Lord Dunsany to the New York stage and that it has remained for the youngsters above designated to institute probably the most likely forum for the short play that New York has enjoyed since Arnold Daly's brilliant lease of the Berkeley in 1907, may not be a bad thing at all.

Quite true, the first bill of plays uncurtained by the Washington Square folk is rather full of illegitimate babies, free love, sexual intercourse and kindred topics favourite of youth when youth seeks to be "strong" or "clever" or "insurgent," but I don't know but that, after all, this may be more interesting than the more temperate drivel of the arterio-sclerosis school. Probably the chief thing that these young Players will have to contend against in their bid for serious recognition will be the designation "Washington Square" which they have attached to their title. This section of New York, with its imitation Latin Quarter atmosphere, its smell of cheap wines, its frequent pink-bound volumes of *vers libre* and the insistent striving of its old maids at all costs to be "defiant," has become something comic in the eyes of the city. And so the employment of its name will work harm to the otherwise praiseworthy cause of the lessees of the Bandbox.

The best of the pieces of home manufacture displayed by the Players is a satire by Edward Goodman called

"Eugenically Speaking," a quick little play dealing with a pert, fashionable baggage who has Shaw on the brain and who, taking to heart something he has written in the recent periodical prints relative to the selection of a mate, goes out, picks up a strapping street-car conductor, and totes him back home—object matrimony. To the wench's disappointment, the conductor informs her he is already married. The brine fills the wench's eyes as the conductor makes for the door. At the knob, he turns. Remarks he to the wench that, had she not bothered about whether he was married or not, had she not stopped where Shaw stopped, had she thought merely of eugenics and nothing else . . . A great light breaks over the wench's face. She pounds her left palm with her little right fist. And the curtain falls.

The other items in the initial program are "Licensed," by Basil Lawrence, a groping after something new in the spirit of "Hindle Wakes"; Maurice Maeterlinck's effective "Interior" and a pantomime the time of which is described as "during Mr. Smith's dinner" and the scene as "inside Mr. Smith," the dramatic conflict being between the food that Mr. Smith attempts to orchestrate and the divers stomach dissolvents. The idea has been used before.

That the stage introduction to the local proletariat of the rare and imaginative work of Dunsany would eventually have to be vouchsafed by amateurs was, of course, to be expected. Just as it is a tradition on the part of our professional managers that, in a military play, no matter where a soldier is wounded he must always wear a bandage around his forehead, so is it a tradition of our theater that either amateurs or Arnold Daly must finally be entrusted with introducing to the American public all the really worth-while dramatists. Thus, Shaw had to be given his first American hearing up a side street. So, too, Echegaray (at Mrs. Osborn's Playhouse). So, too, Strindberg. So, too, Björnson. So,

too, all the rest of them. And now, too, Dunsany.

Although it has for several years been perfectly well known to all persons whose dramatic taste runs a peg higher than

She: I never had a mother's love.

He: You poor little thing.

that the prose poetry of Dunsany is the freshest and the most melodious, the most richly imaginative and by all odds the most piquing that has come out of the western theater of Europe in many a day, it was naturally not to be hoped by these persons that such stage materials would be permitted to supplant if only for a moment on Broadway such rare inspirations as

She: I can't leave Mary here alone.

He: Take the kid with us—then there won't be any extra man.

She: Good scheme, Willie—only it won't work!

He: Why won't it? The little country girl is all right—eh, Merrick?

She: That's just the trouble. The little country girl is all right! She happens to be on the *level*, that's all!

And so, as I have said, in order at length to get a stage peek at the possibly somewhat more entertaining writing of Dunsany, New York has had to take itself on a journey to one of its remote frontiers and give ear to a band of tyros. The play, "The Glittering Gate." The scene of the play—above the stars before the great stubborn entrance to Heaven. The characters of the play—a couple of burglars, both dead. But maybe you don't at all care for this sort of thing. Maybe you prefer your plays to have their scene "the drawing-room of Sir Stafford St. Vincent's house, Grosvenor Square"; the characters, Lady Luella, young Daskin just back from Uganda, and dear old Pitts the butler.

Do you, to the contrary, still in the face of the sinister warning as to Dunsany's scene and characters, have a mysterious hankering to know his queer

stuff? Be careful! Do not with too sudden rashness make up your mind. You may repent it. There is no use throwing away money carelessly. So let me caution you that in none of Dunsany's plays, from beginning to end, is there a single funny remark about pinochle or a single allusion to Vernon Castle. What is more, Dunsany has carelessly and witlessly omitted from his plays the line "Why should I think of the future—this is my birthday and I'm thinking of the present." And he hasn't had the imagination to cabbage a single situation from Sardou or to rewrite "Pink Dominoes." How now then, Roderigo? Feel you still the itch? Then hie you hence, my good fellow, to the nearest book mart and there purchase the Dunsany plays. If you do not, you undoubtedly will not be able to see the pieces acted from our stage until some time around 1982.

A movement called "The Modern Stage," ciceroned by Emanuel Reicher, the German actor, has been set going at the Garrick with Gerhart Hauptmann's "Elga." Whereas "Elga" was originally produced in 1905 and whereas since that time it has been vastly excelled not only by the work of Hauptmann himself but out-moded as well on its own ground by dramatists of other nationalities, the modernness of the stage for which Mr. Reicher promulgates himself as sponsor may be open to debate. I am, in this, reminded of the gentleman who bears the daily milk to the household of my erudite associate, Mencken, in Baltimore. On the rear terrace of the Mencken estate stands a sundial, brought from Italy by Mencken's present wife. For months this sundial attracted the puzzled attention of the milkman and each morning he was seen inquiringly to finger and to scrutinize it. Finally, unable longer to contain his curiosity, the milkman made bold to ask my friend what the hell the thing was. "That," my friend informed him, "is a sundial." The milkman, still perplexed, desired

then to know what a sundial was. And my friend explained to the fellow that the small iron dingus was so adjusted on the dial that one could tell the time from the shadow cast thereon by the sun. The fellow was dumbfounded. "Gawd," he ejaculated, "what'll they be inventing next!" Inasmuch as "John Gabriel Borkman" is the second play announced by Herr Reicher, that worthy gentleman's *modern* stage would seem to be even more like the sundial than appeared at first glance.

Although Herr Reicher is a deservedly conspicuous member of his profession, and although I am always one to welcome such as he into the native proscenium, my bosom somehow refuses to heave in excitement over his current exploit. His production of "Elga" was meanly interpreted by a band of mediocre minstrels and, as a whole, was unworthy of a man who occupies the position which he occupies in the theater of Germany.

Another foreigner. This time Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry. As I have already set down in another critical place, this sixth-rate young English actress has once again been performing nightly her task of convincing the American public that, aside from the spectacular acoustics of her name, she possesses no particularly noticeable qualifications for the dramatic theater. The lady's latest anticking was in Anthony Hope's "Adventure of Lady Ursula." It is seldom that I concern myself with criticism of actors—especially the lady actors, as I am ever too chivalrous and soft-hearted a fellow for such work—but I cannot resist the present occasion. I have witnessed this Miss Neilson-Terry's attempts at acting for lo, these five years, both on her native heath and, more recently, upon our own and I do not know but that, all in all, she amounts to as thoroughly incompetent a mummer as in that time I have seen. There are any number of comparatively obscure young women in the American theater whose performances would put hers to shame. There is, indeed, an amateur with the Washington Square

Players who seems to have thrice her sense of comedy. Why then the conspicuousness granted this posturer in our theater? The answer is simple: she happens to be English. And, in the theater, our people ever delight in confusing the words "English" and "ability." Witness the huzzahs over Mr. Cyril Maude's interpretation of the absurdly facile and sure-fire part in "Grumpy." Witness the reception of the third-rate acting aggregation picked up by the canny Mr. Granville Barker and obliquely foisted on us as his original company, an aggregation, with two or three exceptions, of so low an order of skill that he would not dare show it in London; probably, indeed, would never think of showing it. For he is a shrewd showman. And knows what dolts we are over here. Witness the reason assigned for the failure in this country of "General John Regan": that Charles Hawtrey's performance of the leading rôle in London had been the life of the play. When every even half-way sober American who had seen the performance of the piece abroad knew that Hawtrey's performance was not to be compared in any way to that given locally by Daly. No wonder the English despise us as they do. No wonder they look on us as uproarious yaps.

One Sunday evening, several weeks ago, having nothing to do but read the editorials in the New York *Times* and wishing to improve my mind, I went to a moving picture theater. To be precise, to the New York. As I took my seat in the auditorium, there was beginning to unwind a film entitled "The Chinatown Mystery." A lowly Chink had been murdered, it appeared, and there was no clue as to the identity of his slayer. Our hero, a newspaper reporter, after desperate cunning and strategy, contrived to learn the name of the murderer, another lowly Chink. Whereupon our hero, in exultation, slammed his way out of the door in headlong haste to get back to his city-room, while there was flashed upon the

screen the bass-drum-banging legend:

"This Will Be the
Scoop of a Lifetime!"

Appreciating that the story of the discovery of the Chink murderer's identity would have been worth just about three lines of agate, if that, to our hero's gazette, and still desirous of improving my mind, I sallied forth to another motion-picture house and slid into my seat just as the American ambassador to a foreign monarchy, in a sentimental farewell scene with a lady of the court, was pulling a little American flag out of his pocket. One minute later found me again in the open. But, still declining to be downhearted, I essayed another film house a couple of blocks along the highway, and as my trousers came into contact with a seat therein my eyes were regaled with the vision of a group of students at a great American university rollicking upon the snow-banked campus in cap and gown.

After this, in desperation, I went back home and started in on the *Times* editorials.

In view of this experience, it was natural that I should approach reluctantly the labour of beholding Mr. D. W. Griffith's screen version of Thomas Dixon's yellow-back, "The Clansman." Yet here proved to be a motion picture as unlike any other motion picture I have seen—and I particularly do not except one of my own making dealing with the exploits of Detective Burns—as Granville Barker's "Midsummer Night's Dream" is unlike William Shakespeare's play of the same name. I realize that it may be somewhat difficult for the majority of my flock to imagine such a thing as a good moving picture—I allow the task seems almost as difficult as imagining a good actor—but this thing that Griffith has done is, while babbling where it concerns itself with Dixon's "plot," a really fine inventive specimen of the craft of active photography. The historical fea-

tures of the film—it bears the title "The Birth of a Nation"—such as the march of Sherman through war-torn Georgia and such as the assassination of Lincoln in Ford's Theater, have been projected with a skill and tact hitherto unthought of in connection with motion pictures. And, in the general details of the film, this Griffith reveals himself to be a fellow of fertility and an excellent melodramatic theatrical sense. Among the spectacular elements of the picture, in addition to those already mentioned, are a raid by guerrillas in a Southern city, a great ball on the eve of the troops' departure for Bull Run, an artillery battle, a wild cavalry ride through the night and a little blonde named Lillian Gish.

Had I a young daughter, and did I wish to pick out those pieces which I deemed eminently safe, proper and fitting for her to see, I should make it a regular practice to recommend to her only such plays as had at least one of their acts laid in a bedroom. When the curtain goes up on an American play or on a foreign play adapted for the American stage and reveals a lady's boudoir, one may be quite certain that nothing will happen that a very young girl should not see—particularly if the time of the action is night.

On the American stage, a lady's bedroom may be described as a room in which the audience sleeps. The boudoir of Mme. Marielle Blondeau, in the local moralization of Paul Frank's and Siegfried Geyer's "Reizender Mensch"—called "Taking Chances"—runs true to our best traditions.

The only new risqué touch still allowed this particular bedroom scene is the presence in it, for the first ten minutes of the act, of Mme. Blondeau's husband. After this pleasantly impudent novelty, and immediately upon M. Blondeau's exit, Mme. Blondeau's lover sneaks in and everything becomes, of course, perfectly proper. Madame, following the established custom in these scenes, goes behind a screen, takes off

her evening gown and presently reappears more amply clothed in a night dress. And the swagger Count de l'Astra begins killing time with the usual boudoir lover rigmarole of "may I smoke?" This done, the ardent souls commence the usual contest to determine which one can talk more irrelevantly than William Jennings Bryan—and so the mad, passionate adapted hours pass, the culmination of the sex orgy coming when the tempestuous Don Juan, unable longer to control himself, imprints a little kiss upon Madame's hand.

I am at present working on a play possessed of a notably fine idea. The trouble with the general run of these boudoir plays, as I look at it, is that the audience sees only the acts of the play, dull acts wherein nothing happens. I am going to do away with the acts in my play. I am going to dramatize the intermissions.

Mais en voilà assez. Let us back to this Frank-Geyer play. A comical and persuasive notion at the bottom of it: a suave rogue who, by an endless chain of letters of introduction from the prefect of police in one city to the prefect of police in another, and by the subsequent boudoiring with the spouse of each in turn, contrives to commit lucrative thefts and yet beguile the prefects to let him go unmolested. The tone of quick, light satire which pervaded the manuscript and its interpretation in the original is, on the local elocution platform, missed with such studious consistency that the traffic takes on the air of slow-paced, heavy melodramatic farce. So far as one can make out from the stage direction, the gentlemen responsible for the staging of the play have confined their light touch to the electric switchboard. The purple-glowing boudoir of Madame looking, indeed, for all the world like Murray's restaurant.

The play, save in the minor rôles, is ineffectively acted; Mr. Lou-Tellegen, in the leading part, substituting a Stein-Bloch figure for histrionic ability, and the lady playing opposite him several

millions of dollars' worth of gowns for the same thing. In view of the increasing prevalence of the lazy and detrimental custom of so many of our lady players to permit their toilettes to substitute for talent and hard work, I have a suggestion to offer our more sincere and serious producers, a suggestion which—will they carry it out—cannot, I believe, fail in time to improve to a very considerable degree the quality of acting in the native theater.

My suggestion: Make the ladies rehearse their rôles in the altogether.

I made bold, of a recent evening, to loan my person to an audience before a burlesque show at the Columbia Theater, by name "Follies of the Day." Though I do not presume to be a critic of the institution, it would yet seem to me, from sporadic attendance, that all burlesque is based upon the theory that the funniest things in the world, in the order named, are: (1) a firm of lawyers named Ketcham and Cheatem; (2) a German comedian named August Furst; (3) any and all references to cheese; (4) a large, bearded, fierce-looking desperado who, when finally he opens his mouth, speaks in a high falsetto; (5) slapping a fat lady in tights upon that portion of her anatomy which corresponds in location on the map of Europe to Roumania; (6) barking like a dog when a sausage is mentioned; (7) a Salvation Army captain proclaiming "We save girls" with the ejaculation on the part of the comedian "Save me a brunette for Tuesday night"; (8) the vision of a bandana hanging out of the coat-tails of a so-called "rube" character; and (9) a travesty on "Three Weeks."

Consider how different is the higher form of entertainment known as musical comedy! Generally speaking, musical comedy is based upon the theory that the funniest things in the world, in the order named, are: (1) a firm of lawyers named Steele and Skinner; (2) a German comedian named Ludwig Dinklespiel; (3) any and all references to an onion; (4) a large, . . .

THE TROUBADOURS A-TWITTER

By H. L. Mencken

HARPS, lutes, psalteries, ophicleides, dulcimers, fifes, viols d'amore, shawms, sackbutts, hautboys, banjoes, tabors, balalaikas, citoles, rebeccs, cornets, castanets, tambourines, saxophones, bagpipes, bassoons, bugles, lyres, guitars, trumpets, spinets, glockenspiels, harmoniums, trombones, clavichords, citterns, cymbals, crwths, cervelats, chalumeaus, clarinets, oboes, chimes, harmonicas, virginals, piccoloes, barrel organs, mandolins, zamrs, whithorns, flageolets, hurdy-gurdies, rybybes, huslas, tom-toms, snare drums, tubas, waldhorns, serpents, buzines, zithers, flutes, Jews' harps, archlutes, tenoroons, rattles, tympani, cow bells, xylophones, triangles and "the usual strings": I can bear them all in the ante-chamber. The oboe sounds its baaing A; the rest reach for it, snuffle at it, tunnel under it, slide over it. It is the eve of May Day; the bock beer mounts in the maples; the zephyrs chirp in the trees; the birds blow softly from the South; the poets are back again. . . .

Let them in one by one, Zarathustra, old top—and don't spare your club if they crowd! Poets are a naif and eager lot, with their veins full of incandescent star dust. Unpoliced, they would run amuck, knock down the hall of audience, trample one another to death. So be careful as you admit them. There: that's the way: one at a time. . . . And who, prithee, is No. 1? No. 1, it appears, is the talented Prof. Edwin P. Haworth, of Kansas City, Mo., the Edgar Allan Poe of those parts. In his hand is a copy of his latest work, "SUNSHINE AND ROSES"; under his arm is a viola da gamba,

gnarled and mellow. He opens fire at once and his choice is a lay of amour. To wit:

Azmarine! Enchantress, she
Leads me through the glens,
Coaxing and beguiling me
With some power not human's . . .

Hold up, good professor! Let us hear that again. "Through the glens . . . power not human's?" What sort of prosody is this? Hast the effrontery in this high-toned company to rhyme "glens" with "humans," even with "humans?" The ideer! . . . Out with him, Zarathustra! Down the chute with him! Over the fence with him! To the lions with him! . . . But halt! The rules, it seems, save him, or, at any rate, reprieve him: two chances for every candidate at the bar. Even Shakespeare sometimes slipped, as witness—but no need to offer examples. Let us hear this Prof. Haworth de Kansas City again:

It is only an artificial rose,
Witherless, fadeless, unreal,
Wanting the fragrance and freshness, for-
sooth,
Genuine roses reveal.
It is only the artistic handwork of man,
Imitation of nature and life,
And yet in this art is concealed for a heart
The mem'ry of love and strife.

"Only an artificial rose"? "Only the artistic handwork of man"? Off with him, Zarathustra! He has had his second chance! To the lions, tigers, wolves, leopards, lynxes, jaguars, cougars, hippopotami! . . . So, he has departed. Now a chair and a polite bow for No. 2—an estimable lady poet, Miss

Jessamine Kimball Draper. Hear her begin:

Gray clouds scudding,
Milk cows cudding . . .

What! Milk cows *cudding*? Can you point to such a word in Webster, Miss Jessamine? There is *cud*, a noun (from the AS. *cwidu*, a stomach, a gizzard), but where is *to cud*, a verb? No doubt you mean *ruminating* (from the L. *rumen*, a throat, a gullet, an æsophagus). But *ruminating*, of course, doesn't rhyme with *scudding*—nor, for that matter, with any other word in English. . . . However, let it pass. Every poet has two chances. Thus Miss Jessamine's response to her second:

To be alone—what is it, then,
In this vast universe?
Is't when we walk a lonely road,
Or sit in solitude,
Or find there's none to lift our load,
Or give us, hungry, food,
We suffer with this curse?

Suffer with? How can one suffer with a curse? Under it, from it, even despite it, but surely not with it. Is the curse itself, then, also suffering? Let Miss Jessamine look into the matter a bit more carefully, and report upon it at length at our next annual meeting. . . . Meanwhile, No. 3 is waiting, the same being Prof. Horace Traubel, of Philadelphia, Pa., with his "CHANTS COMMUNAL" (*Boni*) under his arm. This Prof. Traubel, it appears, disdains all the ordinary and orthodox forms of poetry. He refuses to saw up his threnodies and exultations into stove-lengths, nor will he dally with the corrupting voluptuousness of rhyme. It also appears that he disdains all rewards or emoluments for his labors. Witness:

You think I am fighting a fight for wages. For pay. For a glass more of beer. For better cigars. For costlier clothes. To get rid of rags. Well. So I am. But only incidentally. I am really fighting for life. As long as wages are only wages high wages and low wages are all one. But when wages are life I embody my plaint in a different song. I am fighting for life. I have fought

fights for wages. But I have fought my last fight for wages. I have seen that no fight for wages can be the fight of freedom. There is only one fight left. *The fight against wages.*

With the highest respect for a venerable and bald-headed bard, Pish! All this tall talk against wages is merely so much buncombe, academic and empty. In point of fact, no one has offered Prof. Traubel any wages. No man with a heart would dare to offer any poet wages. The revenues and usufructs of the true maker and singer do not come in the form of pounds, shillings and pence. They reach him as the music of heavenly harps and sackbuts, inaudible to earthly ears; as the sweet ticklings and caressings of ineffable winds; as the pungent, swooning scents of indescribable flowers; as the cosmic leaps and gurgles of the blood in his own arteries; as the rolling surges of remote and illimitable oceans; as the deafening applause and clapperclawing of the angels and archangels, the cherubim and seraphim; as the blinding sweeps and flashes of a light that never was on land or sea. The poet is paid in ecstasy, in afflatus, in divine madness, in transcendental unguents, in hydrogen; not in cash. As well talk of paying off the Twelve Apostles on Saturday night! . . . But let us hear Prof. Traubel again:

I want to be counted. I do not want to stand out from the rest. I am willing and glad to remain in the crowd. I am willing to serve and for no one to know me. The humblest job in the cause is not too proud a job for me. The proudest job in the cause is not too humble a job for me. Here I stand. I am ready. I want to be counted.

Here the poet is easier to comprehend—and to accommodate. Let us count him at once: he is No. 3. And before ordering him to that lowest hell where Socialists are doomed to shine the shoes of the late Karl Marx forever and ever, let us remove his little brass identification tag and mail it to his weeping heirs and assigns, that they may know he died the *Heldentod* for poesy. . . . After him comes another

rebel, to wit, No. 4, Miss Nanna Matthews Bryant, whose "PHANTASIES" (*Badger*) fill 94 pages. Miss Bryant's rebellion, it appears, is against the pain and bother of seeking an idea before inditing a poem. All she needs is a pen and a piece of paper. In a few moments she has set down a few pointless and empty lines, and her poem is done. For example:

The dusk falls over all,
A hush is o'er the dying day,
The cricket's drowsy chirp
Makes evensong along the dusky way.

Again:

Silent waters,
Deep shadows,
Strong light,
Great might.

Toward the end of her book Miss Bryant dispenses with intellectual content altogether, and her poetry is conveniently written with a rubber stamp. To wit:

A gray sea,
A gray sky,
And I am sailing, sailing, sailing.

A gray sea.
A gray sky,
The winds are wailing, wailing, wailing.

What could be easier to write than this sort of verse? Given the rubber stamp, a child of six should be able to manufacture it by the yard. It represents the supreme triumph of words over sense. To find its match one must go to the New Thought dithyrambs of Prof. N. Vachel Lindsay. For example:

Whangaranga, whangaranga,
Whang, whang, whang,
Clang, clang, clangaranga,
Clang, clang, clang.
Clang—a—ranga—
Clang—a—ranga—
Clang,
Clang,
Clang,

This specimen of the poetry of the future is from Prof. Lindsay's "THE CONGO AND OTHER POEMS" (Macmillan), the which seems to be arousing a

lot of excitement in the woman's clubs and other such centers of advanced thinking. But as for me, low, beery brute that I am, I can find little in it save a lot of strutting and empty doggerel, some of it almost on all fours with the primitive strophes that schoolboys chalk upon school-house fences. Nor is it helped out by the ludicrous stage directions that the author offers to possible elocutionists. *Zum Beispiel:*

To be brawled in the beginning with a snapping explosiveness, ending in a languorous chant.

Lay the emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.
All the o sounds are very golden.
Like the wind in the chimney.
Like a train-caller in a Union Depot.

Miss Harriet Monroe, in a preface to the book, says that it represents an attempt to restore "poetry as a song art, an art appealing to the ear rather than the eye." Nonsense! Poetry has never ceased to be a song art; it is inconceivable save as a song art. The moment it becomes so stiff and formal that it fails to woo and tickle the ear, it is no longer poetry in any genuine sense, but merely prose chopped into lengths. The strident, hop-legged, puerile bosh that Prof. Lindsay here sets before us falls into this category, for it lacks entirely that inner and pervasive music which is at the heart of all authentic poetry. Mere rhythm, however assertive, is not music. If it were, then a college yell would be comparable to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Music is "a concord of sweet sounds"; it must have melody and harmony as well as rhythm. And beneath its melody and harmony and rhythm there must be a certain emotional dignity, an elevation of mood, an exaltation of the soul. You will find that exaltation in things as widely apart otherwise as Whitman's "*Salut au Monde*," and Miss Reese's "Tears," Kipling's "Diego Valdez," and the Queen Mab speech in "Romeo and Juliet," "Annie Laurie" and "*Die Wacht am Rhein*." But you will not

find much of it in "The Congo and Other Poems."

In his rôle of prophet of a new school of comic versifiers, Prof. Lindsay is even more inept and unsuccessful. Miss Monroe mentions with approbation the theory of Signor Marinetti, the Italian futurist, that the germs of a new art are to be found in the extravagances and eccentricities of American vaudeville, and she seems to be of the belief that Prof. Lindsay is pointing the way to it. But consider the following specimen of his humor:

The Lion is a kingly beast,
He likes a Hindu for a feast.
And if no Hindu he can get,
The lion-family is upset.

He cuffs his wife and bites her ears
Till she is nearly moved to tears.
Then some explorer finds the den
And all is family peace again.

What could be more hollow, more silly, more banal? Ranged beside it, such a vaudeville song as "My Wife's Gone to the Country" seems a veritable masterpiece of humor. Besides, Prof. Lindsay is years too late with his "popcorn, glass balls and cranberries," as he calls them. Let him study the songs of Otto Julius Bierbaum, Erich Hartleben and the other clever fellows of the Berlin *Überbrettl*, before he spills any more ink; he has a lot to learn from them. . . . And meanwhile, let him have his hat, his poet's cloak and his rain-check. . . .

Of the next comers we get but a flashing glance. Zip! and they are gone! An inspection of the entry-list reveals the names of Walter Malone, author of "HERNANDO DE SOTO" (*Putnam*), and Richard Osborne, author of "THE CONQUEST" (*Gorham Press*). Two epics, suave, elegant, scholarly, but oh, so long! "The Conquest" runs to 3,500 lines; "Hernando" to no less than 18,500. Why should any sane man struggle through such endless jungles of words? The thing, indeed, is against all reason. A poem of 18,500 lines is as essentially absurd as a novel in ten volumes or a symphony of twenty movements. The sense of

beauty is not made of rubber: it cannot be stretched *ad infinitum*. Even the classical epics, when all is said and done, are hoary old bores. They belong to the childhood of poetry, and their chief appeal is still to the childish—e.g., to pedagogues. To say that they represent a height of achievement which the poetry of our own time has not surpassed is just as ridiculous as to say that Aeschylus' band of lyres, trigonons and sambukas made better music than the Boston Symphony Orchestra. . . . Let the epicians depart!

And after them, hurriedly, a whole troop of poets who have little to say, and say that little tediously—John Curtis Underwood, with his "AMERICANS"; H. E. Walker, with his "INTIMATIONS OF HEAVEN" (*Stock*); Robert De Camp Leland, with his "BALLADS OF BLYNDHAM TOWN" (*Bailey*); Patrick R. Chalmers, with his "GREEN DAYS AND BLUE" (*Norman-Remington*); Louise W. Kneeland, with her "SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW" (*Sherman-French*); Ed. Blair, with his "SUNFLOWER SIFTINGS" (*Gorham Press*); Joseph Noel, with his "LOVE'S BREADLINE" (*Claridge Press*); Blanche Goodman Eisendrath, with her "POEMS"; George Herbert Clarke with his "AT THE SHRINE" (*Stewart-Kidd*); Walter Conrad Arensberg, with his "POEMS" (*Houghton*); Charles Henry Mackintosh, with his "SONG OF SERVICE." I can find nothing in all this vast emission of strophes that is worth noting. They say the old things, conventionally, flaccidly, without invention. Prof. Noel solemnly compares the city to a harlot. Prof. Leland solemnly hymns the Maytime and sentimentally woulds that he were a boy again. Prof. Chalmers offers us 173 pages of indifferent newspaper verse. Prof. Walker announces his hope of Heaven in 150 uninspired sonnets. Miss Kneeland greets us with this:

Joy of the earth! Exquisite flower!
In the wildwood I found thee,
Nestling alone, and thy strange power
Weaves still its spell around me.

And so on and so on, sometimes

better than this and sometimes worse. The one effort at originality is made by Prof. Underwood, whose "one hundred representative Americans of today . . . address themselves directly to the reader in speaking parts of thirty lines or less." Thus the School Teacher:

Near three-quarters of a million, fifty thousand on part time,
Average classes fully fifty; that's the black collective crime.
Crowds your schools, and crowds your prisons; crowds your cities, lifetimes too.
We can teach the life you lend us, but the rest remains for you.

And the Chorus Girl:

Chorus girls are human beings, just the same as you.
Some are straight and some are crooked, some between the two.

Is this poetry? If so, then I take the count! . . . Curiously enough, another poet, Edgar Lee Masters, has attempted much the same thing—but with how vastly greater success! Mr. Masters' "Spoon River Anthology" has yet to be published in book form, but it has appeared serially in the *St. Louis Mirror*, and so we may let him in today. The anthology is made up of stanzas of irregular metre and length, each bearing the name of some citizen of Spoon River (a real village in Illinois), and setting forth, as it were, his outlook upon the world. Thus the contribution of Rutherford M'Dowell, the village photographer:

They brought me ambrotypes
Of the old pioneers to enlarge.
And sometimes one sat for me—
Some one who was in being
When giant hands from the womb of the world
Tore the republic.
What was it in their eyes?—
For I could never fathom
That mystical pathos of drooped eyelids,
And the serene sorrow of their eyes.
It was like a pool of water,
Amid oak trees at the edge of a forest,
Where the leaves fall,
As you hear the crow of a cock
From a far-off farm house, seen near the hills
Where the third generation lives, and the strong men

And the strong women are gone and forgotten.

And these grand-children and great grand-children

Of the pioneers!

Truly did my camera record their faces, too,
With so much of the old strength gone,
And the old faith gone,
And the old mastery of life gone,
And the old courage gone,
Which labors and loves and suffers and sings
Under the sun!

Here is true poetry, albeit as gnarled and unadorned as the pioneers it celebrates. It has sincerity; it has a delicate fancy; it shows a genuine feeling for beauty. Superficially, it deals with the lives and loves of petty and unconsidered men, but what one gets out of it, in the end, is a sense of spaciousness, of epic sweep and dignity, of universal tragedy. The general, indeed, elbows out the particular: Mr. Masters, upon his little stage, sets a drama that must move all of us. . . . Let him have a bay leaf, Zarathustra, and a card of invitation to next year's *sängerfest* . . .

Which clears the audience chamber for the Imagistes—a round dozen of them. Rebellious ladies and gentlemen, making faces at orthodoxy in all its forms! It is Miss Amy Lowell who speaks for them. "Away," says she, "with didacticism, rhyme schemes, hobbling metres, ancient forms." The aim of poetry is "to head-up an emotion until it burns white-hot"—and that sort of heading-up is not to be done in corsets, hoop-skirts, straight-jackets. Give the poet room! Make him free to "find new and striking images, delightful and unexpected forms."

Take the word "daybreak," for instance. What a remarkable picture it must once have conjured up! The great, round sun, like the yolk of some mighty egg, *breaking* through cracked and splintered clouds. But we have said "daybreak" so often that we do not see the picture any more, it has become only another word for dawn. The poet must be constantly seeking new pictures to make his readers feel the vitality of his thought.

A sound enough idea, and, what is more, it actually seems to be producing excellent poetry. In sooth, you will go a long, long way, beloved, before ever

you find anything better than the opening poem of "LES IMAGISTES" (*Boni*) —a thing called "Choricos," by Richard Aldington—a sonorous and beautiful apostrophe to Death, noble in its conception and exquisite in its details. I have room for only the closing lines:

And silently,
And with slow feet approaching,
And with bowed head and unlit eyes,
We kneel before thee:
And thou, leaning toward us,
Caressingly layest upon us
Flowers from thy thin, cold hands,
And, smiling as a chaste woman
Knowing love in her heart,
Thou sealest our eyes
And the illimitable quietude
Comes gently upon us.

Nor is Mr. Aldington the only Imagist to strike this clear note. There is true beauty, too, in F. S. Flint's rhapsody upon London, in Ezra Pound's strange fancies from the Chinese, in John Courno's rhythmic prose, above all in Miss Lowell's "In a Garden." This last also appears in Miss Lowell's book of "SWORD BLADES and POPPY SEEDS" (*Macmillan*), and with it there are half a dozen other things of notable quality. What could be more brilliant than the procession of colors in "The Pike"—a truly magnificent evocation of visual images by the magic of words? And what could be better done than "Music," with its subtle suggestion of the cold, pale beauty of flute tones? When she attempts conventional rhymes and metres Miss Lowell is a good deal less successful. Her long ballads, indeed, are frankly third-rate. But in the new forms she offers work of unmistakable distinction. . . .

Thus for these Imagists a joint wreath. But what for the Futurist who succeeds them, to wit, the wicked and terrible Prof. Allen Norton, with his "SALOON SONNETS" (*Marie*)? For Prof. Norton a grant of sixty cents from the privy purse, to get him a tabble doty with red ink—the immemo-rial nutriment and stimulant of young poets fresh-loosed from the udder. Sonnets to (or against) Bwana Tumbo, Mother Eddy, Oscar Wilde, Evelyn

Nesbit—what deviltry, alack, is here! What a flouting and shocking of the lady critics of the *New York Times*! What Advanced Thinking! What Rebellion! What Diabolism! Is not the goose-flesh raised by such strange, staggering conceits: "Perfumed with vichy . . . this erring, purring tiger's tail . . . the flowers harden . . . the daubs of dew"? Is there no law in the land to put down such ribaldries:

And Satan winks at me in weird neckties . . .
And I believe in the burning of priests . . .
I brought her thistle sandwiches and beer . . .
Drinking his white absinthe like dish-water. . . .

A naughty fellow is this young Mr. Norton—a smasher of idols, a whooper in sanctuaries, a hobgoblin to college professors. Let him have a care: he will end on Tyburn Hill if he continues roistering with those atheistic sophomores. . . . And meanwhile, O Zarathustra, let him have a gentle lift under the coccyx, and drop him gently down Chute No. 2. . . .

Next a Parnassian in process of cure: *videlicet*, Prof. Harry Kemp, late of the Roycroft Shop, with "THE CRY OF YOUTH" (*Kennerley*). Now and again the old madness overcomes him and he erupts in such manner as this:

Bob had a nigger woman,
That kicked and bit like a horse
More jungle-wild than human . . .
She knifed him in due course . . .

Bob had a nigger woman:
She knifed him till he died . . .
For six whole days she wouldn't eat . . .
For seven more she cried!

But in the main he avoids such satanic excesses, and one even finds him reading the Bible and making poems upon Nicodemus, King David and other such archaic worthies. The thing that redeems Mr. Kemp as a poet is his genuine love of simple folk and open spaces. Once he turns from the gaudy lures of the city to the space and freedom of the Great Lakes, the range and the harvest field, he grows earnest and impressive. His long poem, "THE THRESHER'S WIFE" (*Boni*), is an un-

disguised imitation of John Masefield, but it is a good deal better done than most of the things in the last book by Masefield himself, to wit, "PHILIP THE KING" (Macmillan). In this book, indeed, Masefield is seldom very interesting, and often downright tedious. Let him have done with patriotism, and give us more Salt Water Ballads!

Various worthy bards have been waiting overlong: Seumas O'Sullivan *geb.* Starky, Franklin P. Adams, James Oppenheim and Louis Untermeyer among them. Let in Louis first. A change, indeed, since "First Love" and the days of his nownage! The love-sick youth now emerges as a serious (and sometimes almost solemn) man, and fully a half of the rhymes in his "CHALLENGE" (*Century*) are sword blades rather than poppy seeds. For example:

The quiet and courageous night,
The keen vibration of the stars,
Call me from morbid peace to fight
The world's forlorn and desperate wars.

The air throbs like a rolling drum—
The brave hills and the singing sea,
Unrest and people's faces come
Like battle trumpets rousing me.

And while Life's lusty banner flies,
I shall assail, with raging mirth,
The scornful and untroubled skies,
The cold complacency of earth.

Hoch Louis! I confess that I like these ringing, clangorous lines. There is military music in them; they are stark and masculine; they roll out *maestosamente*. And elsewhere in the volume there are echoes of the same clarion note—for example, in "To Arms!" "The Great Carousal," "God's Youth" and "Summons." In the last-named one finds a truly noble apostrophe to Beauty. And later on, as if to prove that the boy still lives in the man, there are some luscious lays of amour. Pass M. Untermeyer, Zarathustra, and give him the Order *Pour la Mérite* . . .

There is again the snorting of trombones in the "SONGS FOR THE NEW AGE" of James Oppenheim (*Century*), but too often Mr. Oppenheim is so fiercely in earnest that he sacrifices beauty to mere preaching. Preaching, true

enough, is capable of arousing very hot emotions, and emotion is the heart and soul of all poetry—but the Muses must do their work more gently, more adroitly, more indirectly. An alarm of fire is not a poem, and neither, I opine, is such a thing as Mr. Oppenheim's "Civilization." On the contrary, it is a sermon, a homily—if you will, an excellent oration. But elsewhere the poet exhorts less and sings more—for example, in "A Woman for the Adventure," a sonorous and colorful paean to *das ewig weibliche*. Another fine thing is his hymn to the sun; yet another is "Annie," a sentimental piece; a third is the sequence called "The Adored One." No trailer, I believe, after the Imagists, Mr. Oppenheim has yet adopted some of their ideas, and the result of his application of them is often poetry of unmistakable force and dignity. Let him have the Red Eagle, II Class.

Adams and O'Sullivan rush through without stopping: perhaps they have Chautauqua dates! When you get a chance at the "BY AND LARGE" of the former (*Doubleday*), don't miss "The Cabaret Bards," "Mates for the Mateless," and "The Ball Game." And when you read O'Sullivan's "AN EPILOGUE" (*Norman Remington*), you will linger, I am sure, over his exquisite "Rain in Donegal." . . . Which leaves a lot of bards still waiting—and our time all gone. Too bad, too bad! There is good stuff in Arthur Stringer's "OPEN WATER" (*Lane*), in H. De Vere Stacpoole's complete translation of Villon (*Lane*), in W. J. Dawson's "AMERICA" (*Lane*), in Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff's "ERIS" (*Moffat-Yard*), in Padraic Colum's book of Irish "BROAD-SHEET BALLADS" (*Norman Remington*), and above all, in William Stanley Braithwaite's "ANTHOLOGY OF MAGAZINE VERSE FOR 1914." This Braithwaite volume is now a hardy annual, and it offers a devastating answer to those donkeys who constantly bray that American is producing no sound poetry. . . . And as usual, THE SMART SET poets lead all the rest.



In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Jeanne Judson



If you are interested in advance information not only about the mode, but about things novel, dainty and useful, to be found in New York's best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We will be glad to tell you where any of these articles can be found, or we will purchase them for you if you desire. Simply address your inquiry to The Smart Set Shop Department.

TRULY the relative values of things feminine are a bewildering matter to a mere man. In the blouses, which play so important a part in this season's wardrobe, this is especially apparent. There are the deliciously fluffy, "crepe de cheney," soft tinted things which sell for a mere song, and right beside them are some severely simple linen, batiste or muslin things, which would win the approval of any man and which cost anywhere from \$25 to \$100. And to women who know these things they are well worth the price.

SIMPLE BLOUSES

There is one shop on Fifth Avenue that is famous for these "simple" hand-made French blouses. I saw one there of sheer batiste, with four rows of cross tucks running down the front. The buttons were crocheted; and the collar, which can be either low or a high stock, was hand hemstitched and adorned with a black ribbon tie. The sleeves are long and finished with cuffs to match the collar. This blouse, hand-made, sells for \$35; machine-made it is only \$25.

Another, of lavender organdie, has a high, turnover, hemstitched collar, finished with a small, lavender bow. It has tucked shoulder pieces and rows of fine tucks run down the front. Hand-made it is \$35, and machine made, \$25.

Then comes a blouse of China silk in wide blue-gray and white stripes. The low, white silk collar, bordered with blue, is finished with a tailored velvet

bow. Round pearl buttons, and long sleeves, finished with deep, white, blue-bordered cuffs, complete the ensemble. The price is \$25.

SHOES THE SHORT SKIRTS SHOW

Never has footwear occupied more attention than in this season of short skirts and trim ankles. From one Avenue shop, which gives special attention to designing shoes for every costume and occasion, come the Sedan pump and the Elysee slipper.

The former is an imitation oxford of patent leather with putty, champagne or putty sand kid top, adorned with mock leather laces. Dull leather or Russia calf may be substituted for the patent, if desired, or sand kid with the top of white calf. The price is \$10.00.

The Elysee is a strap slipper in fawn buckskin with Russia calf heel and straps; pearl gray suede with gray kid heel and straps or white calf with black patent heel and straps, at \$10.00.

This shop also offers the tongue slipper of dull leather, with faun buckskin back at \$7.50.

Sport oxfords of white buckskin with white leather soles and heels, adorned with banding of patent, one-eighth of an inch wide, cost \$9.00. These may also be had in tan or mahogany calf, dull leather or green leather. The green leather combination costs \$9.50.

According to this shop there is a tendency to discard buckles or any trimming which tends to shorten the

appearance of the toe. The effect is as smart as it is simple.

FROM THE FRENCH

The Chenal hat is interesting not only as a decidedly new note in headgear, but also because of the controversy that has arisen as to who originated it—two rival firms claiming the honor. Suffice it to say that it is very attractive as shown by a prominent Fifth Avenue house.

The hat itself is nothing more than a tiny—very tiny—black silk bonnet, such as our great grandmothers delighted in, but the entire front is covered and draped in an enormous Alsatian bow of black silk. The only touch of color or trimming is provided by a tiny red, white and blue ornament on the left side of the bow. The hat is designed after one worn by Chenal, the French prima donna, and the black and tri-color ornament represent the mourning and patriotism of France.

In this shop also is shown "Seduction," a French afternoon frock that will probably be copied in various modifications all over the country. It is a Paquin model made of two-tone taffeta in cerise and turquoise blue. It has a deep girdle of the cerise and a skeleton jacket with a white vest of chiffon cloth. The collar, an extension of the vest, is round and widely flaring, held up by heavy hat-frame wire. Over the right shoulder is hung a wreath of pink roses and beaded flowers. Wide gauntlet cuffs flare almost up to the shoulder. The upper part of the sleeve is of the chiffon cloth. Each cuff is caught to the upper sleeve with a rosebud. The skirt, however, is perhaps the most radical feature of this striking frock. It is full, of course, but it is uneven in length, dipping up and down at angles that would drive an old-time modiste distracted. The skirt is lined, and faced with cerise and finished with a wreath of roses, placed just a bit under the hem. As to the name it will depend entirely on the wearer as to whether the gown will be seductive or destructive to her social career.

TANGO HANDKERchiefs

Tiny handkerchiefs of chiffon and crêpe de chine are among the latest novelty offerings of one large Fifth Avenue shop. The crêpe de chine kerchiefs come in white or colors with borders of small roses of contrasting shades. The chiffon handkerchiefs are white with wide borders of rows of fine taping. Then there is the ombre, a veritable rainbow of shaded colors from deepest purple to pale blue, and the tango, a white crêpe de chine affair with tiny colored, dancing figures in the corners. These charming novelties cost only 25c. each.

In these days of short skirts it is well to regard one's hose seriously; though nothing could be more frivolous than some of the patterns shown. White silk hose, ribbed, with fine black plaids and clocks of black, gold or any desired color are the appropriate thing for morning or early afternoon wear. They sell for \$2.95. Silk hose of fawn, beige, putty or champagne color with clocks of black or contrasting colors, or white hose clocked with different colors, sell for \$1.45 to \$3.95 a pair.

For evening wear there are open-work and lace insertion hose in all the popular colors for \$4.50 and \$5.00 a pair. Then come the very latest—military hose, black, white or colors, clocked to represent high boots and trimmed with a row of tiny black, pearl or steel buttons down the front. These cost \$8.00 a pair.

TWO LINGERIE BARGAINS

Reminiscent of January sales are some of the real bargains in lingerie to be found in one just-off-Fifth-Avenue shop. An envelope chemise of fine nainsook, trimmed with embroidery and fish-eye val edging around neck, sleeves and bottom, sells for 95c. The same pattern may be had in cotton crêpe also for 95c.

A pink or white crêpe de chine envelope chemise, trimmed with ribbon bows and pink and blue rosebud knots on the front, is only \$3.95.

Linens are always of interest to

women everywhere, and so it is not strange that I was led astray from my mission of buying towels, by some more than usually attractive luncheon sets in a shop I visited last week.

One of Mosaic or Ajour embroidery, made in Germany—the set consisting of the center piece, one dozen plate doilies and one dozen finger bowl doilies—was priced \$75.00. Another of Madeira, very charming in design, with the same number of pieces was only \$11.00. And one of combined Madeira and cut work was \$47.50. Sets of Italian filet and needle point combined cost from \$50.00 a set up.

THE NEW SILKS

Khaki-kool pongee and pussy-willow taffeta are perhaps the most popular silk fabrics for suits and gowns for the coming summer.

The pussy-willow shows innumerable designs in stripes, checks, plaids and Pompadour (flowered) effects. There is a Chinese design on Chinois blue ground; a broken stripe in green and white or blue and white, a black tulip pattern on a black and white striped ground; and silhouette dots on a woven, satin checked ground.

It is interesting to note that the Khaki-kool will be equally popular for both men's and women's suits.

Pussy-willow silks retail for \$3.00 a yard every place, while the Khaki-kool pongees vary in price according to weight and texture.

THE BLACK AND WHITE GOWN ROOM

To have all her suits, gowns, hats and wraps designed especially for her is the dream of every woman. A shop which has for its patrons the women who are fortunate enough to have realized this dream has recently opened a new gown room. This room, true to the newest concepts of art, is all done in black and white. Black and white furniture of graceful, modern design is set against a background of black and white walls. A thick carpet of huge black and white checks covers the floor and black and white embroidered curtains with checked borders drape doors and windows.

Four decorative panels by Malcolm Strauss add to the beauty of the whole. Along the sides are spacious mirrored dressing and fitting rooms and one larger room, softly lighted, for the display of evening gowns. There is just a touch of American beauty rose in the decorations here.

The striking black and white color scheme is carried out in every detail. Even the tea wagon is equipped with a tea set of checked black and white china. The desk equipment and books are bound in black and white leather.

A three-piece costume is a thing of infinite utility for spring wear, when the weather is so undependable. I saw one in a little shop where model gowns are sold that was particularly attractive, made of a foundation of chiffon broadcloth in a buff or light sand shade. The blouse is of chiffon and there is a box-pleated tunic on the skirt, also of chiffon. A tiny Eton jacket is added to the frock, and the whole is trimmed in leopard skin cloth. The third piece of the costume is a three-quarter length, sleeveless cloak. The suit sells for \$59.00. It is an imported model.

SUMMER FURNITURE

In this day of period furniture reproductions and adaptations, one often hears the remark that there is no truly modern or truly American style of furniture, with the exception perhaps of the mission which, however, because of its clumsiness and narrowness of scope, ceased to be popular some years ago.

This statement is not quite true. There is a genuine modern American furniture, made by a New York shop, which for charm and utility need not give precedence to any of the historic periods. It is designed on the general lines of the mission, retaining its direct simplicity of line, but adding to it delicacy and individuality. It is, in fact, a refined mission. This shop, by the way, was one of the first to make the mission furniture, their model chair being found in the New Jerusalem Church of San Francisco.

The new style of furniture is made of

ash, combined with McHughwillow and rush. It is called St. Leonard's. Ideal for porch or cottage use, it is yet dainty enough for a living room, library, breakfast room or bedroom.

One piece, a dressing-table seat, long and low, of ash, with rush seat and willow paneled ends, is priced at \$15.00.

A round, outdoor or porch table of green ash, with a lower shelf, paneled with willow to prevent magazines blowing away, is both beautiful and practical. Its cost is only \$15.00.

A dining table designed for a home in Staatsburg-on-Hudson is of ash stained a dull brown. The base is adorned with a trellis of McHughwillow and the round top is edged with willow. Even pianos can be put in a St. Leonard's casing. I saw one of green ash, trimmed with panels in natural willow.

St. Leonard's furniture can be had in any color to suit different rooms or homes—gray, forest green, willow green, sand gray, dull brown and polished brown, or in contrasting enamels, such as black and scarlet, a very striking library combination.

MORE THINGS FOR THE HOME

An antique shop on East 45th Street devotes itself almost exclusively to English furniture and china. Years of buying and selling only things English have made this shop a place where one is almost certain to find anything desired in old English furniture, pottery or china.

Among the many interesting things in their showrooms is a charming old Sheraton sideboard, equipped with large urn-shaped knife boxes with very unusual melts in Sheffield plate. A Chippendale china cabinet with a nicely fretted top and ornamental pediment is filled with salt glaze pottery, bits of old Worcester ware and Chelsea shepherdesses.

No matter where you live you can always avail yourself of the best that the New York shops have to offer, through the Shopping Service which THE SMART SET has established. Or if you live in the city you can save time by making use of this department, which is designed for the convenience of all of our readers. We will purchase anything for sale in New York City upon receipt of its retail price, or if the cost is unknown to you, we will price the same and hold it for you until the requisite amount is received. Every article described in this department is guaranteed to be as represented. This service is at your disposal free of charge.

I found a real bargain for the summer hostess in bamboo serving trays being shown by a Fifth Avenue shop. The trays are a rich red in color and in two sizes, eighteen or twenty inches in diameter and shallow or deep as desired. They are large enough to hold an ordinary tea service, and sell for only \$1.50, though one would expect to pay two or three dollars for them.

Another bargain in the same shop is a really handsome and practical motor pillow of Japanese embossed leather, filled with silk floss. Just right for that little curve in your back if you would be luxurious on a long drive. They are round or square as desired and cost \$2.00.

THE QUEST OF BEAUTY

In this day everything is specialized, and the attainment and preservation of youth and beauty are no exception. Mid-lady's eyebrows (at least some eyebrows) may well claim a lifetime of devotion and study. So New York women have learned that it is not often they can find all they seek in one shop.

A mere man, for example, has established himself as an authority on scalp treatment and the care of the hair. Hundreds of women come to him daily to have thin locks made thick and glossy and thousands of women all over the country write to him for advice.

Hands grow old faster than faces do, and many women with smooth cheeks and brows have on their hands the telltale fine lines that show they are no longer young. One woman in New York has made the hands her special study and has evolved a treatment that is very effective. It removes discolorations and softens, whitens and tightens the skin of the hands. It is also very effective in the same way for the skin of the face and throat.

(Continued on second page following)

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Second Gentleman : "WHICH, THE SERVANT OR THE BOTTLE?"

First Gentleman : "BOTH."

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AT THE SHRINE OF BEAUTY

Elle est arrivée!—the new exponent of the Cult of the Face Beautiful. New to the great majority of American women, that is. In Paris, London, Vienna, up to Petrograd, hers is a name to conjure with, and those of our countrywomen who know their Europe well have for years past made their periodic pilgrimages to her "houses of beauty" in Paris and London. Mme. Helena Rubinstein, the beauty specialist of European celebrity, is now in New York.

Although established only a short time in her beautifully appointed house in Forty-ninth Street, East, just off Fifth Avenue, Mme. Rubinstein is becoming one of the most talked-of women in New York City, so rapidly has the news of her successful work and the intrinsic value of her unique preparations spread.

"What is my treatment? I have at least twenty-five," says Mme. Rubinstein. "How, then, am I to describe them to you? I do not subject all of my clients to one and the same régime. Every case is different; every case must be specially studied and specially treated. And none of these different people must go away dissatisfied."

"The secret of retaining a youthful appearance? There is none. One must have studied. One must have knowledge, and I am always ready to impart some of my knowledge to those who want it. *Voilà tout.*"

"Is it not best, when the skin is healthy, to simply let it alone?" I asked.

Mme. Rubinstein smiled and said: "I have often had this question put to me and, curiously enough, always by American women. The thought back of it is due to two common mistakes. The one is that no distinction is made between 'skin' and 'complexion.' A skin may be perfectly healthy from a medical point of view, and yet the state of the complexion may be anything but satisfactory and attractive. Take a weather-beaten, freckle-stained skin. Medically there may be nothing wrong with such a skin, but where is the beautiful complexion with which we are all

endowed from our birth, and to which half the beauties of the world owe their reputation for loveliness entirely?

"As to letting the skin alone, this is the second mistake. Civilized people who believe in hygiene never do let their skin alone. We know that there are healthy human beings who do not bathe, but it would be barbarous to conclude from this that a healthy skin never needs a bath. That being so with the skin in general, how much greater must necessarily be the hygienic and well-arranged care of the skin of the face, which is the only part of the body that remains always unprotected and exposed—and yet in it alone is centered what we first look for when a woman's beauty is in question."

Among the preparations which Mme. Rubinstein uses in her treatments and supplies to those of her clients who are unable to come to her and prefer to treat themselves in their own homes is the celebrated Valaze Beautifying Skin-food, called Valaze for short. This is the invention of the Russian skin specialist, Dr. Lykuski, originally, but Mme. Rubinstein has since acquired the exclusive control of this great beauty product. Valaze is extensively used in the courts of Europe. It is a preparation which not only stimulates the skin and causes it to retain its freshness and purity of tint, but disperses freckles and remedies the ravages caused by wind and weather.

Another of her specialties, and it is unique in the world, is the Novena Sun-proof and Windproof Creme, which possesses the peculiar virtue of completely preventing freckles and sunstains. This preparation is one of the greatest achievements in the chemistry of beauty culture. It actually enables a devotee of golf, tennis, yachting or any other open air sport to expose her face to the sun and to return home without a vestige of tan or sallowness. Those of my readers who wish to have fuller particulars of these unequalled preparations may write to Mme. Rubinstein for a copy of her exhaustive booklet "Beauty in the Making."